NWT Labour Force

Development Plan

... A Workable Approach

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NWT Labour Force Development Plan

... A Workable Approach

Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment
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Message from the Minister

Development of the labour force in the NWT is critical to the health of the Northern economy. Currently, the skills of the working age population do not adequately match the skills required by employers. Many Northerners do not have sufficient education levels or the employability skills to find and keep a job. For true economic growth, we must improve and invest in developing the workforce to meet the demands of the labour market.

I am pleased to present the *Labour Force Development Plan – A Workable Approach*. This document provides a picture of the current issues and, building upon existing programs and services, charts a new course towards a highly skilled workforce.

In a time of difficult fiscal realities, a strained social security system, and complex labour market challenges, it is critical that we work together to improve the employability of Northern people. The demands of the workplace are constantly changing through technology and the impact of the global economy. Educational requirements for jobs are rising each year. As the youth population increases, so does demand for programs and services to help young people toward labour market integration. The best form of social security is people with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to achieve economic self sufficiency – whether through traditional pursuits or the wage economy. This means individuals themselves, employers, communities, educational institutions and governments each doing our part to make sure people are prepared for existing jobs and new opportunities.

We are confident that by working cooperatively, and with a plan in place, we will be able to meet the challenges of today's labour market with a skilled and productive labour force.

Charles Dent

The Honourable Charles Dent
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

Executive Summary

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment was directed to develop a labour force development plan linked to current labour market activity. The economic priorities of the Government of the Northwest Territories are:

- to improve economic conditions by enhancing the creation of new and sustainable jobs;
- to maximize the number of residents who fill these new jobs; and
- to create a business climate that will ensure that jobs, investment and capital will be attracted to the North.

The Labour Force Development Plan addresses the labour force elements of these priorities.

> ***The overriding goal of the plan is to strengthen the capacity of the Northern workforce to meet the demands of the labour market by ensuring that Northern workers have the skills and knowledge needed to secure wage employment in the land in which they live.***

To achieve this goal, six key areas for labour force development have been identified and specific strategies developed. These key areas are based on an analysis of the education and skill levels of the existing labour force in light of the needs of the Northern economy. Additionally, the Labour Force Development Plan describes the context in which planning must take place and the implications for all labour market stakeholders regarding roles and responsibilities.

Many changes are taking place in the NWT which will have a profound impact on both the economy and labour force development. The most significant of these include the changing nature of work, the increasing activity of Aboriginal claimant groups, constitutional development, greater authority for decision making at the community level and fiscal restraint. As well as constraints, there are forces of expansion in the Northern economy. For example, preparations are underway to develop the human resources which will result in a representative Inuit workforce in the Nunavut public service. As well, anticipated developments in the mining sector may create large numbers of jobs in mining, construction and other support businesses.

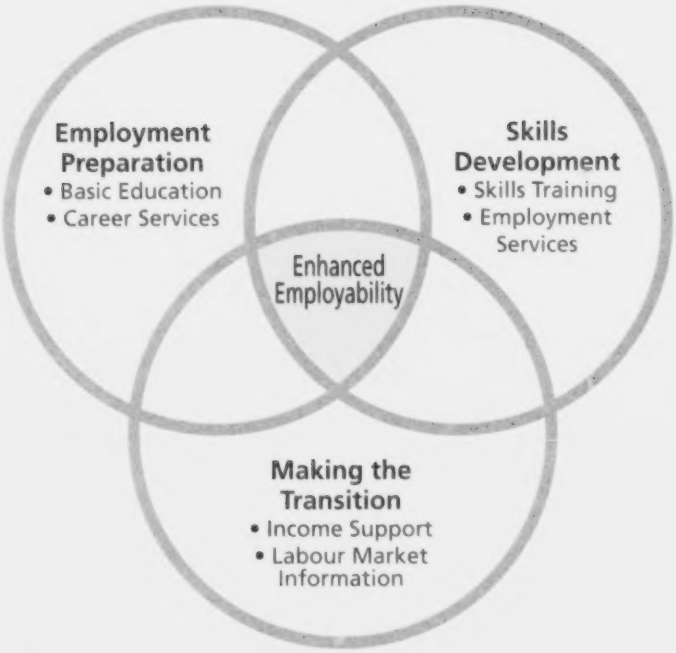
The Labour Force Development Plan addresses the labour market issues of both Nunavut and the West, while recognizing the impact of the impending division of the NWT. The plan addresses a three year period but sets the foundation for ongoing development of the Northern workforce.

For the size of its population, the NWT has as many jobs as Canada as a whole. But, our unemployment rate is much higher. Two main reasons account for this. *First, Northerners do not have access to Northern jobs because they lack the necessary formal education.* The skill requirements of our economy are very high and rising. In addition to addressing the skill deficits of its population, the NWT needs to train its workforce just to keep up with the changing needs of the workplace. *Secondly, the lack of a strong market economy in most small communities results in very few jobs and high unemployment.* The small communities need more productive opportunities if they are to grow and prosper, and provide opportunities for the current residents and the increasing number of young people growing up in them.

Focusing labour force development requires measures on both the supply and demand sides of the labour market. Three critical areas for enhancing the employability of Northerners are identified and they form the basis of the plan. These are further broken down into six sub-components as demonstrated in the model.

The *Employment Preparation* component looks at what must be done to make sure Northerners have the basic education and career development opportunities to access jobs that are meaningful to them. *Skill Development* examines ways in which people can be helped to gain job specific skills and work experience. This component also addresses the human resource needs of employers. The last component, *Making the Transition*, identifies the supports needed to help people make successful transitions to employment.

Components of the Plan



Employment Preparation

The goal of Employment Preparation is to ensure that individuals are provided with the basic education, employability skills, and an awareness of their career options to make successful transitions to employment or further education and training. Current initiatives include a range of opportunities for adults who want to improve literacy and numeracy skills such as Adult Basic Education programs, access years and GED. In addition, people who need assistance in identifying suitable employment options can receive help through regional career centres. Employment readiness opportunities are also available through a number of in-school programs such as Career and Technology studies and Schools North Apprenticeship Program. Future initiatives will include enhancements to existing services such as senior secondary schooling in every community, implementation of an adult basic education policy, a workplace literacy strategy, stronger linkages between education and the work world and the mobilization of career services to all NWT communities, regardless of size.

Skill Development

The goal of Skill Development is an adaptable Northern workforce with the skills to participate in the traditional or wage economy. Currently, a number of programs exist to meet this goal. These include such things as the programs of the public colleges, apprenticeship, the Building and Learning Strategy as well as industry-based training. While these programs are geared to individuals, others exist to help employers hire and retain staff. Examples include Training on the job, Canada-NWT Infrastructure Program and Apprenticeship Training Assistance. Future initiatives will include the expansion of the Schools North Apprenticeship Program and other cooperative education initiatives, development of NWT occupational standards, more mining and other industry-based training and an examination of new ways to deliver apprenticeship programs.

Making the Transition

The goal of Making the Transition is to ensure that people have sufficient information, personal and financial support to make the transition to employment. Current programs in place include Student Financial Assistance, Income Support, Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons and Daycare Subsidies. Future initiatives will include the ongoing development and delivery of the Income Support Program, single window access to federal/territorial programs and services, and a harmonization, where possible, of GNWT support programs. Additionally, more effort will be directed at developing timely, Northern labour market information that will be disseminated using print and technologically based methods.

Developing the labour force, regardless of the initiatives undertaken, is a shared moral and financial responsibility. Government cannot do it alone. Individuals, employers, communities, educational institutions, as well as government, must work together to ensure the goal of a prepared Northern workforce is met. In many instances this will mean a redefinition of roles and responsibilities. This direction is further reinforced through the GNWT's community wellness and community empowerment initiatives.

The GNWT has set an ambitious agenda with the Labour Force Development Plan which means priorities will have to be set. By retargeting and refocusing programs and services, clarifying responsibilities, and increasing planning and coordination, the workforce of the NWT will benefit for many years to come.

Introduction

In 1989, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment produced an Employment Development Strategy. While the goals of that document are still relevant today, many changes have taken place in the NWT which require a new look at how to prepare Northerners for work in the future.

In response to those changes, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment was directed to lead the development of a labour force development plan linked to current and future labour market activity.

The *Agenda for Change* tabled at the Thirteenth Legislative Assembly outlines a vision for the future of the Northwest Territories and sets clear priorities and objectives which focus on getting things done. The economic priorities of the present government are:

- to create a climate for business that will ensure that jobs, investment and capital will be attracted to the Northwest Territories;
- to improve economic conditions by creating new and sustainable jobs; and
- to maximize the number of Northern residents that fill these jobs.

The Labour Force Development Plan is one of six strategies developed to ensure the Government's economic priorities are achieved.

> ***The overriding goal of the plan is to strengthen the capacity of the Northern workforce to meet the demands of the labour market by ensuring they have the skills and knowledge needed to secure wage employment in the land in which they live.***

What is Labour Force Development?

Labour force development is *the ongoing enhancement of the employability skills of the current and future workforce*. This is generally achieved through mechanisms such as education, employability programs, labour market information and exchange services, adjustment services such as counselling and equity measures, income and personal support, job creation and community development and developmental and preventative measures like stay-in-school programs and workplace training.

Why do we need a Labour Force Development Plan?

A labour force development plan provides a framework through which analysis can occur and decisions made regarding needed programs and services.

Unemployment and underemployment are a waste in economic and social terms. In the NWT, two key labour market issues affect whether Northerners have jobs:

- a mismatch between the skills and education level of Northerners and the demands of the labour market; and
- a lack of jobs in small communities.

The two problems are quite different and require different solutions. A Labour Force Development Plan provides a framework for programs and services which can improve access to existing jobs by investing in the education and skill development of people in the NWT. Development of the labour force can also help to create jobs in the long run, through increased ability to identify and realize economic opportunities.

A Labour Force Development Plan is not a job development strategy. Growth in jobs and income will require more than labour force development. Economic development, community development and greater support for the traditional sector will also be required in most communities to ensure economic growth, employment and social equity for all Northerners. To create these opportunities and meet the challenges of the future, a commitment by governments, educational institutions, industry, Aboriginal organizations, communities and individuals to work co-operatively is essential.

The benefits of investing in the development of the Northern labour force are many. They include:

- increased individual self-sufficiency and self-esteem;

- people moving efficiently into and between jobs;
- decreased reliance on income support programs;
- more equitable participation and income levels of all Northerners;
- a healthy Northern economy; and
- healthier communities.

To realize these benefits we must:

- reduce unemployment by investing in the education and skill development of young people;
- help Northerners obtain the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to find, keep and progress within jobs;
- focus on individual needs and responsibilities using flexible, accountable programs at the community level;
- develop opportunities within communities; and
- create a "training culture" within the workplace where employers share responsibility for developing workers to their full potential.

What is the scope of labour force development?

A truly comprehensive labour force strategy can cover a vast range of areas, from the policies and organization of the education system to the rules governing the labour market. It can examine things like labour relations, the school system, the economy, income and employment supports, and work standards. In fact, the range of factors affecting the work force is so wide that it is almost impossible to devise a single, comprehensive labour force strategy.

What does the Labour Force Development Plan cover?

In developing the plan, these interrelationships have been recognized but the primary focus is the working age population. These are people 15 years of age and over. Although the public education system is a critical link to ensuring young people have a sufficient level of education to access jobs or further training or education, it is discussed only as it relates to an individual's employability. There has already been a great deal of work completed regarding reforms to public education in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's strategic plan – *People: Our Focus For The Future*. Among many other activities, significant investment will be made in improving student retention and achievement so that our young people are equipped to create positive futures for themselves.

The Labour Force Development Plan is divided into sections which:

- identify changes occurring in the workforce on both a global and Territorial level;
- examine the Northern economy and the interrelationship between labour force development and economic development;
- analyse the current labour force situation in the NWT;
- provide the foundation for labour force development;
- develop strategies for enhancing the employability of Northerners;
- discuss the changing roles and responsibilities of labour force development partners;
- discuss the changing role of communities throughout the process;
- provide methods to resource the plan; and
- establish an implementation plan with detailed timelines.

The Context for Planning

The world today is rapidly changing. Technology, globalization, demographic shifts and the changing nature of work are significantly affecting our lives and our jobs. We have moved from an industrial based society to one built on information and knowledge. Communications are now possible across great distances allowing for relatively inexpensive information exchanges. The "Information Age" has created a shift in the economy enhancing the sectors related to the provision of services and knowledge. Changes in technology, knowledge and markets are expected to accelerate, requiring workers to have higher education levels, information processing and scientific skills, and a commitment to ongoing personal and professional development.

These global trends, combined with the following political, economic and social changes in the Northwest Territories have set the context for labour force planning:

- the changing roles of governments;
- the settlement of land claims, constitutional development and community empowerment; and
- limited financial resources.

While change can appear daunting, it opens the door to many new opportunities.

The Changing Role of Governments

As more control over economic activity is being assumed by communities, relationships between governments and community organizations will have to change. There will be greater control of program development and delivery at the local level with territorial and federal governments playing a more supportive role than in the past. Communities will set their own priorities based on local needs and manage their own affairs. Not only will this create new opportunities and a need for training at the local level, but it will require a total review of current roles, responsibilities and delivery structures.

Governments at all levels are reconsidering their roles in labour force development. These changes are driven by many forces including limited financial resources as well as the recognition that increased participation by employers, employees and other interested parties is necessary if an effective labour force development process is to be established.

The movement toward greater control at the local level is evident within all levels of government. As an example, the federal government, in redefining its role in the labour market, has proposed to all provinces and territories a new partnership in labour market activities. The GNWT is in a position to take on greater responsibility for training of Employment Insurance recipients. This includes the development and delivery of programs and services, selection of trainees and employment counselling and placement services. Negotiations are currently underway to determine the nature of the partnership in the NWT.

The Settlement of Land Claims, Constitutional Development and Community Empowerment

Over the next few years, division of the Northwest Territories, the settlement of land claims and the move toward self-government will significantly change existing government structures and profoundly influence the way programs and services are delivered. The Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Inuit and Sahtu Dene have already settled land claims with the federal government. Other groups, such as the Metis, the Dogrib Treaty 8 and the Dene of the Deh Cho are either in negotiations or determining how to proceed with land claims. The settlement of claims provides opportunities for new economic development and the redefinition of authority and responsibilities.

In 1999, division of the Northwest Territories will take place. The GNWT has already begun human resource planning to fill jobs in the new Nunavut Public Service, including the addition of many new headquarters positions. Many jobs in the new government will require higher education and skill levels, especially in headquarters positions. In fact, 90 percent of jobs will require post-secondary training and many Inuit currently do not have a sufficient academic base to access those jobs. While this plan does not break out labour force issues east and west, a specific strategy has been developed

which aims, through basic education and training programs, to develop a pool of qualified Inuit to secure jobs in the Nunavut Public Service. The NWT Labour Force Plan does, however, provide the foundation for labour force development regardless of community or region of residence.

In relation to community empowerment, the GNWT has established a priority to reorganize its activities in order to strengthen the role of communities in planning and delivering programs and services.

The Fiscal Reality

Government spending reductions will limit funds available for programs and services. Reduced federal transfer payments for post-secondary education, health and social services, combined with reforms to the Employment Insurance Act, will have a dramatic effect on all residents of the Northwest Territories and place an increased burden on the Government of the Northwest Territories. For example, the federal withdrawal of funding for training programs in 1996-97 has cut $0.5 million from the NWT Apprenticeship Program, $2.4 million from the purchase of training courses and $4.0 million from Investing in People, a program for social assistance recipients. The GNWT has also cut more than 10 percent of current expenditures for 1996-97. The GNWT has a goal to balance the budget by the end of the 1997-98 fiscal year. This translates to over $100 million in reductions during 1996-97 with more cuts in 1997-98.

These funding reductions affect labour market programs and services. In addition to budget reductions, costs are rising and demand for service is increasing.

It is now more important than ever that governments assess their programs and services to determine if public funds are being spent in the most effective way. Governments must look for opportunities to co-ordinate and integrate programs with other partners, and explore new methods of service delivery, particularly at the community level. To do this, priorities, goals and a plan of action must be in place which ensure positive futures for Northerners and their communities.

The Northern Economy

Economic development and labour force development go hand in hand. Without labour force development, economic development will result in a greater in-migration of Southern workers to fill jobs while Northerners miss opportunities because they lack the necessary skills. A skilled work force is able to benefit from existing jobs, compete for new jobs or create more jobs, either through self employment or by employing others.

The NWT economy is still growing and creating jobs, despite the fact that growth is not continuing at the rapid rates of the 1970s and 1980s. Statistics Canada's Survey of Employment, Earnings and Hours shows that the number of jobs declined in 1990 and 1991, and began a very slow recovery in 1992. From January 1992 to January 1994, there was less than 2 percent annual growth in employment. This rose to 8 percent in 1994, and was 6 percent in 1995. The growth occurred in both goods producing and service producing industries. Between 1992 and 1996, about 700 jobs were created in the goods producing industries like Construction and Mining and over 3000 jobs were created in service producing industries like the Retail Sector, Education, Health and Social Services, and Government. Service producing industries account for more than 80 percent of the jobs in the NWT.

While the number of jobs in the NWT doubled between 1971 and 1991, overall, growth has slowed significantly since the mid to late 1980s. This can be traced to the following factors:

- decline in mining sales and reduced growth in government spending;
- decline in the sale of furs; and
- limited growth in the fisheries industry.

If the NWT economy is to grow and prosper, new opportunities must be found. While the trends of the last decade must be noted, it is also important to recognize that change is occurring which will provide new opportunities. The GNWT's Economic Framework recognizes that a healthy economy is based on supporting a variety of sectors including mining, oil and gas, fisheries, forestry, agriculture, wildlife and fur, arts and crafts, manufacturing, travel and tourism, and business. Specifically, several areas for development are worth noting. These include:

- increased exports;
- support to the traditional economy;
- manufacturing; and
- business opportunities.

Increased Exports

Currently mining has the greatest potential for creating new jobs in the NWT. With the discovery of diamonds, mineral exploration is proceeding at an unprecedented level in the Slave Geological Province as well as in the Keewatin and the Baffin Regions. This activity presents significant opportunities for seasonal employment in mineral exploration. Several exploration sites are currently in the advanced development stage. The environmental assessment review of the BHP project concluded favourably and construction is due to proceed this year. Over 1100 mine production jobs and about 800 construction jobs could be created as mine projects proceed. Businesses created or expanded to service the new mines could generate an additional 800 jobs. Further opportunities for job creation can be found in the oil and gas, tourism, art and forestry industries.

- There has been a renewed interest in oil and gas exploration in the Sahtu and Fort Liard areas. In the last two years, sixteen parcels were issued in the Fort Liard area and seven in the Sahtu. Exploration activity commitments in these areas are estimated at $40 million to the year 2000.
- The number of visitors to the NWT is expected to increase over the next several years to 73,000 by 1999 – up 11,000 over five years if we package and market our product effectively.
- Forestry in the NWT is an under-utilized resource. Currently, the NWT satisfies only 24% of its own demand for lumber. The value of the untapped potential for NWT forests could exceed $30 million.

- The sale of arts and crafts in the North is five times greater than the Canadian average. This sector of the economy provides significant revenue to individuals in small communities. In the next few years there is considerable growth potential within the multimedia and Internet markets for artistic services.

Support to the Traditional Economy

Traditional activities are also important to the economy. In many communities where opportunities for wage employment are limited, traditional activities allow people to participate in the economy through income "in kind". Traditional activities include hunting, trapping, arts, crafts, carving and fishing. For example, according to various wildlife harvesting studies, the imputed value of country food is about $50 million. Traditional pursuits, in isolation or combined with wage economy participation, will lead to increased self-sufficiency. They also provide a viable alternative in communities where sufficient jobs are not available.

Manufacturing

The current value of manufacturing in the NWT is over $17 million. This includes the manufacture of doors, windows, fuel tanks, cabinets, lumber, furniture and canvas bags. A number of other small scale manufacturing opportunities could be developed, particularly in the area of import replacement and products required for mineral exploration and development.

Business Opportunities

In addition to growth in exports, business opportunities in the NWT which provide services to export businesses and their employees are expanding. Services include private sector businesses through to public institutions like schools and hospitals. The prospects for small business in the NWT continue to be positive, especially for those associated with mineral development and the expansion of the tourism industry. A number of studies have identified opportunities for a greater share of NWT business in:

- communications and networks;
- computer maintenance;
- food and field supplies to operators;
- accommodation and food services;
- air services;
- general and office supplies; and
- construction.

With an understanding of current and future economic opportunities and the NWT labour market, education and training programs can be developed to reflect local needs and increase participation of Northerners in employment opportunities.

The Labour Market of the NWT

The limited population of the Northwest Territories is spread out over vast distances within a largely underdeveloped part of Canada. Before the 1970s, many people in the NWT were not participating in the wage economy and were involved in traditional activities. The economy of the NWT grew very rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s and jobs increased from just under 11,000 in 1971 to more than 24,000 in 1991. The population 15 years and older also doubled during this period, due in part to a rapid natural increase as well as an influx of people from southern Canada to the NWT. Despite job growth keeping pace with population growth, unemployment rose from 4 percent in 1971 to 13 percent in 1991.

In the 1970s and 1980s the participation rate (the number of people 15 years and older who are employed or actively seeking work) also increased substantially, particularly within the Aboriginal population. This resulted in unemployment for many, and low wage and seasonal jobs for others. Although the growth of the past was positive for the NWT, and without it more people would have been unemployed, it demonstrates that job growth alone is not enough to keep the people of the NWT from experiencing high rates of unemployment. This is because the labour force of the NWT is not yet in a position to fully benefit from existing jobs or new job growth.

Figure 1

Key Statistics of the NWT Labour Market

Total Employment	25,874
Total Unemployment	5,266
Unemployment Rate	17%
Total Adult Population (15+)	42,476
Labour Force	31,140
Participation Rate	73%

Source: 1994 Labour Force Survey, GNWT Bureau of Statistics

Unemployment in the NWT

In the winter of 1994, 25,874 people were employed in the NWT, and 5,266 were unemployed. The unemployment rate was 17 percent. Missing from these figures are the number of people who are not officially counted as unemployed because they are discouraged and have stopped looking for work. Counting them would boost the unemployment rate to 21 percent. This means that more than 6,700 NWT adults and youth are not supporting themselves as they would like to. The costs of this unemployment are both financial and human. When people cannot support themselves, the social support system must provide for their needs.

Analysis of labour force data indicates that there are two main reasons for high unemployment levels in the NWT:

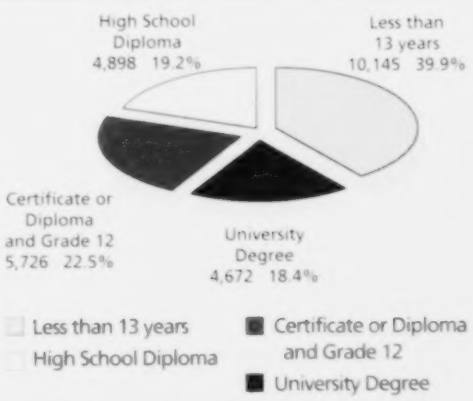
- limited educational attainment; and
- inequitable distribution of opportunities.

Limited Educational Attainment

Northerners don't have full access to Northern jobs because many lack the necessary formal education. Looking at the difference between the skills of the Northern workforce and the needs of employers reveals a significant "skill deficit".

Figure 2

Level of Education of Employed People NWT, 1994

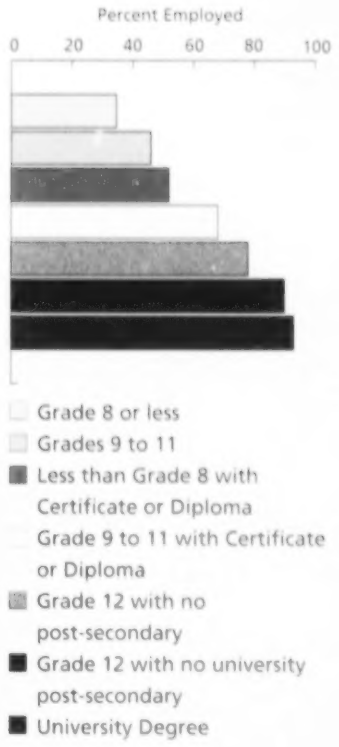

High School Diploma 4,898 19.2%
Less than 13 years 10,145 39.9%
Certificate or Diploma and Grade 12 5,726 22.5%
University Degree 4,672 18.4%
Less than 13 years
High School Diploma
Certificate or Diploma and Grade 12
University Degree

Source: 1994 Labour Force Survey, GNWT Bureau of Statistics

Employers in the NWT require a very highly skilled work force, and skill requirements are rising. In 1994, a total of 60.1 percent of jobs required 13 or more years of education, and this was up from 56.8 percent in 1989. Human Resources Development Canada predicts that between 1986 and 2000, 43 percent of new jobs created will require 13 to 17 years of education.

Figure 3

Relationship Between Education and Employment



Source: 1994 Labour Force Survey, GNWT Bureau of Statistics

The relationship between education and schooling in the NWT is clear. 93 percent of people with a university degree are employed, and most of the remaining 7 percent are out of the labour force. Very few are unemployed. 90 percent of people with a high school diploma and a post-secondary diploma or certificate are employed. Only 32 percent of people with grade 8 or less are employed.

Opportunities exist for Northerners to increase access to existing jobs by raising their education levels and developing the skills that are in demand. Each year, between 2,500 and 3,000 people move to the NWT for work and other reasons. Many of these people will fill the professional and highly skilled technical jobs that the local labour force cannot fill, due to the "skill deficit". Every level of schooling that a person in the NWT gets will increase their ability to get a job.

Between 1989 and 1994, academic levels of Aboriginal people in the NWT dramatically increased. More youth are staying in school longer, more adults are attending Adult Basic Education, and more people of all ages are attending post-secondary studies. Although 39.8 percent of Northerners currently have a grade 8 or lower level of education, this is much better than it was only five years earlier as demonstrated in the following table.

Figure 4

Highest Level of Schooling, 1989 and 1994, Aboriginal People

	1989	1994
Grade 8 or less	53.8%	39.8%
Grades 9 to 11	19.2%	23.6%
Less than Gr. 8 with Certificate or Diploma	6.2%	7.7%
Gr. 9 to 11 with Certificate or Diploma	6.9%	9.5%
Gr. 12 with no post-secondary	6.3%	6.8%
Gr. 12 with no university post-secondary	4.7%	6.0%
University Degree	0.7%	1.0%

Source: 1989 and 1994 Labour Force Surveys

Although education levels are rising, our labour market and program information reveals a continuing "skill deficit" among Aboriginal people.

In 1994, 258 Aboriginal people had university degrees. Although improving, the number is low when we consider that more than 4,500 jobs in the NWT are filled by people with university degrees. Put another way, only 13.8 percent of Aboriginal people have the education that is required to do 60 percent of the jobs in the NWT. Only 1 percent of Aboriginal people have the university education required for 18.4 percent of the jobs.

For those going on to post-secondary studies, there is a "good" match between the fields of study and the needs of the labour market. The most common fields of study are education, counselling, recreation, management and administration, social sciences and related areas, and health professions. These areas all relate to very large occupational groups in the NWT. Currently, most people are studying for the technical and paraprofessional jobs in these fields. The number studying at the degree level remains low, so professional occupations like law, finance, engineering, physical sciences and social sciences are often not filled by Northerners.

Increasing the number of qualified Northerners in the professional occupations, while maintaining the level of skilled workers in other occupations such as trades and office work, will not only improve participation rates, it will also result in reducing staff turnover, lowering recruitment and hiring costs, and ensure that more income remains in the North.

Inequitable Distribution of Opportunities

Employment opportunities are not equally distributed among communities in the Northwest Territories. Smaller communities tend to have a lower employment population ratio. As well, certain segments of the population have not received an equitable proportion of the jobs available. Particularly disadvantaged are Aboriginal persons, youth and women.

Small Communities

Small communities lack a strong market economy. This results in few jobs, high unemployment and lower than average incomes. The labour market in larger communities, like Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, Fort Smith, Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet, provides better employment opportunities. In these communities, the employment population ratio is 76 percent (76 jobs for every 100 people 15 years and over), and the unemployment rate is 9.5 percent. Although there is some variation from Nunavut to the West, almost all of the smaller communities have a weaker labour market. The employment population ratio is 48 percent, and the unemployment rate is 25 percent. While smaller communities have 55 percent of the population 15 years and older, they have only 42 percent of the employment share.

A Trend Toward Urbanization

There is currently a trend toward interregional and intercommunity migration, particularly from smaller to larger centres. People move for a number of reasons including more opportunities for work, training or education, and access to services. Many people see the strong labour market in communities like Yellowknife and Iqaluit as the answer to reducing unemployment. The potential to improve job access through mobility does exist if individuals have the skills that are in demand. Analysis shows that people with high levels of education are more mobile – more than 50 percent of the employed people with university degrees in the NWT moved in order to take their current job, compared to only 9.1 percent of people with a grade 8 or less.

The major problem in the NWT is that most unemployed people have low levels of education and their chance of being employed is not very good in either large or small communities. The chance of obtaining a job in a small community in the NWT is 32 percent with a grade 8 or less. The potential for employment increases to 40 percent in the larger communities. While this may seem like a significant improvement, there simply are not enough jobs to go around for people with low education levels. There are only 531 jobs in the large communities filled by people with grade 8 or less,

and more than 1,500 unemployed people in small communities with a grade 8 or less.

Opportunities for Development

Most small communities of the NWT need more jobs or other economic opportunities, if they are to grow and prosper. The GNWT's Economic Framework suggests that communities like Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay will derive benefits from regional and administrative growth. Others located in or around the Slave Geological Province, like Rae-Edzo and Kugluktuk, can take advantage of mineral related employment. Some communities may be able to benefit from tourism, resource development or untapped resources like forestry. As well, there will be some new opportunities related to government investment given the demand for housing and other facilities and services. Greater community control of programs and services will result in more opportunities for all communities to develop local labour markets.

While job creation is a necessary part in improving labour markets in small communities, long-term development of employment opportunities, including the development and continued use of the traditional sector, is critical. Short-term job creation may provide much needed benefits to individuals but is not a viable substitute for long-term interventions.

Youth

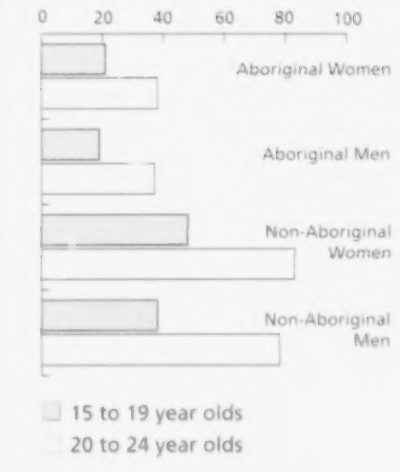
The unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 is 28 percent compared to 17 percent overall. Not only is youth unemployment much higher than the general population, but the participation rate is also much lower at 54 percent compared to 79 percent for the adult population. To a certain extent these differences can be explained. For example, almost half of all youth (43 percent) are in school full time, and a further 5.5 percent are in school part time. About 12 percent of youth have part time jobs while attending school. Youth, however, are not a homogeneous group. There are some extreme inequities within the group:

- non-aboriginal youth have a participation rate of 70 percent, Dene 46 percent and Inuit 47 percent;
- participation rates for youth in small communities is 48 percent and 65 percent in large communities;
- most younger youth, 15 to 19 years of age, are in school (69 percent) while older youth, 20 to 24, are in the labour force; and
- more young women than men are employed, largely because of employment in service sector jobs.

Over the next ten years, the youth population is predicted to increase by 29 percent from 11,473 in 1996 to 14,834 in 2006. This 30 percent increase presents a huge challenge. Without effective planning, programs and services, as well as suitable job creation, those without the education and skills to be productive will be unemployed. Significant social and economic costs will result. The importance of the successful transition of youth from school to the labour market cannot be overstated.

Figure 5

Percentage Employed by Ethnicity, Age Group and Gender, NWT Youth, 1994



Source: 1994 Labour Force Survey, GNWT Bureau of Statistics

Aboriginal People

Aboriginal people face severe job and income inequity in the NWT. In 1989, Aboriginal people earned only 25-30 percent of total employment income. In 1994, Aboriginal people made up 56 percent of the population 15 years and older, held only 39 percent of the jobs and constituted 80 percent of the unemployed.

Figure 6

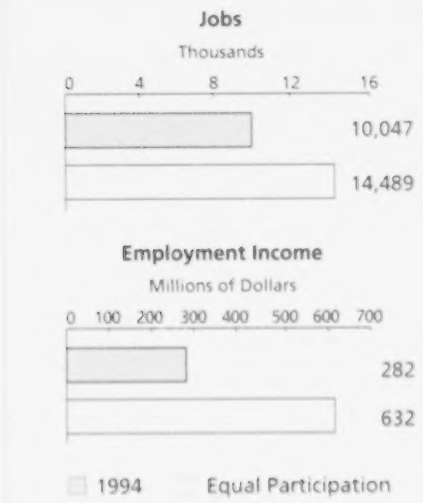
Distribution of Opportunities by Ethnicity

Source: 1994 Labour Force Survey, GNWT Bureau of Statistics

In the same year, the unemployment rate was 30 percent for Aboriginal people and the participation rate was 61 percent. By comparison, the unemployment rate for non-aboriginals was 6 percent and the participation rate was a much higher 89 percent. This discrepancy exists primarily because most non-aboriginal people in the NWT are highly mobile and well educated.

Figure 7

Equal Participation: Potential Benefits to Aboriginal People



Net benefits to Aboriginal people of equal participation: 4,442 jobs, and $350 million.

Source: 1994 Labour Force Survey, GNWT Bureau of Statistics

If Aboriginal people were as representative in the workforce as they are in the general population, they would have 14,489 jobs (56 percent) – an increase of 4,442 jobs. Equity in participation in the labour market is a major challenge facing the NWT, and equity will not be achieved without strong advances in education levels.

Examining Aboriginal participation by occupation shows that participation is low in the following areas:

- middle and other (non senior) management;
- professional occupations in social sciences, education and government services;
- technical and professional occupations in natural and applied sciences;
- clerical occupations;
- skilled sales and service occupations;
- occupations in trades and skilled transport;
- skilled administrative and business occupations; and
- intermediate sales and service.

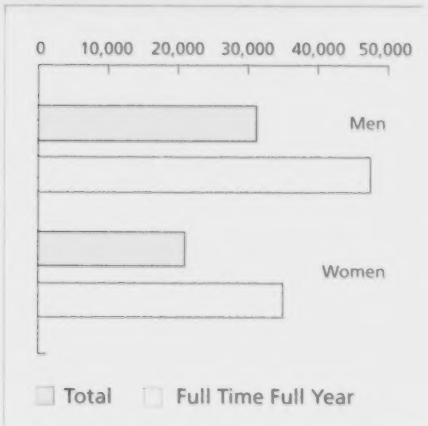
Preparing Aboriginal Northerners for these skilled, well paying jobs represents an opportunity to close the gaps in the participation rates.

Women

Women hold fewer jobs than men and are less likely to work full time. Men's earnings are much greater than women's. The average employment income for NWT women who worked in 1990 was $21,759. This is 69 percent of men's average income. When only men and women who worked full time full year are included, men's average earnings were $47,061 and women's were $35,071. In full time full year work, women made 75 percent of men's earnings (Census of Canada, 1991). This gap is narrowing very slowly (women made 73 percent of men's earnings in 1985), as women increase their participation in jobs traditionally held by men, such as management and trades.

Figure 8

Average Employment Earnings in 1990 by Gender and Work Status



Source: Statistics Canada #93-332 (1991 Census)

Women's labour force participation rates continue to rise: from 62 percent in 1986 (Census) to 69 percent in 1994 (Labour Force Survey), while men's labour force participation is relatively unchanged over this period (ranging between 76 percent and 79 percent and showing no trend towards increasing or decreasing). Women's increased labour force participation is a sign of their increased desire for economic self sufficiency. Single parenthood, which affects more than one in eight women who are raising a family (and an even higher percentage of women will be single parents at some time while raising their children), provides almost a guarantee of poverty unless women have the skills and education to find a well paying, secure job and access to quality child care.

Conclusion

Two types of adjustments can be made to improve the labour market of the NWT by lowering the rate of unemployment and expanding the number of jobs. These are improving job access and job creation.

Job access can work with the available jobs in the NWT to ensure all people have equitable access to Northern jobs. To ensure equitable access, it is necessary to invest in education, training and career development opportunities for Northerners.

Job creation can provide more jobs for people of the NWT. If job creation comes from the private sector, the benefits will reach people who have the skills and education to get the jobs. If it is publicly funded, the benefits can reach unemployed people, but this is an expensive alternative to training for the available and sustainable jobs.

Focusing Labour Force Development

The Labour Market is comprised of two components – supply and demand. The supply side focuses on the workforce, or supply of labour. The demand side focuses on employers and entrepreneurial opportunities, or the demand for labour. Rarely, if ever, are labour markets balanced. They are never static. At times, there is an overabundance of labour in particular occupations, and at other times, there are insufficient people to fill available jobs. Labour markets vary from community to community and from region to region.

When the supply of labour and the demand for labour are not matched, there are a number of adjustment measures governments can use to positively influence the labour market. These measures are used both on the supply and demand sides and are intended to enhance the employability of the people they affect.

Labour Force Development Model

On the supply side, the focus is on education, career development, skills training and retraining, and work experience. At the same time, governments must also ensure that personal or financial supports are in place to help people make successful transitions.

On the demand side, efforts are directed at job development and creation, human resource planning, sectoral initiatives and setting occupational standards.

Both supply and demand benefit from labour market information for planning.

Adapted from the Canadian Labour Force Development Board's "Model of Transition to Employment", this model illustrates how the supply and the demand sides of the market are linked and the need for interventions on both sides to ensure smooth transitions to employment.

It further demonstrates that labour force development can not be addressed in a single policy or action. A Labour Force Development Plan must encompass a broad range of programs and services that support people in developing skills and making transitions into employment. At the same time, it must focus on the kinds of programs and services which are needed to achieve the economic and social goals of government, as well as the best ways to organize and deliver them. Some existing programs and services will remain in place because they serve a constant need. Others will need to be created to address current gaps which have emerged as the Northern economy has developed. Finally, some existing activities must be reshaped or eliminated to complete the mosaic needed to effectively address Northern needs.

A Foundation for Labour Force Development

A labour force development plan must address a broad range of topics to ensure that the discussion of issues occurs within a consistent framework. It is important to define basic principles on which the plan is based. These principles do not have specific activities attached to them, but are implicit in all initiatives undertaken through the Labour Force Development Plan.

Lifelong Learning

- **People need ongoing opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to take and keep their place in the labour market.**

Education and training are no longer only a prerequisite for work, but an integral part of the work process. In a rapidly changing economy, opportunities to improve skills and qualifications are essential if people are to achieve their full potential. All individuals must have access to high quality basic education which enables them to acquire the skills needed to work in a society that is increasingly knowledge-based. Education and training must be relevant to the labour market and support effective transitions to employment. Training programs must also meet the needs of individuals and communities. Learning should be sequential, moving people from lower to higher skills and linked to workplace opportunities.

Shared Obligations and Responsibilities

- **Investing in people is a shared responsibility.**

Co-operation is essential in developing an effective labour force development strategy and finding the solutions to the problems of working and learning in the 1990s and beyond.

The responsibility begins with individuals setting career goals and assuming responsibility for their own learning and development. It also includes support from communities, Aboriginal organizations, employers, learning institutions and government.

Governments must support people through the provision of appropriate career and employment counselling services. The range of services available should extend from self-directed work/life assessments, to group assistance in job search and career planning to individual career counselling. Labour market partners cannot continue to work in isolation of one another. If programs and services are to be both responsive and economically efficient, clearly defined roles and responsibilities must govern the partnerships.

Enhancing Access and Equity

- **All adults should have access to training and employment opportunities.**

Less advantaged people often find it difficult to get work or training, particularly related to higher paying, more stable positions. This can happen for a number of reasons. Some are systemic, such as inflated education levels impeding job access. In other cases, it is because of rigid program admission criteria and lack of flexibility in programming. Occasionally, it is because programs or services simply don't exist within a community. Whatever the reason, improvements must be made to ensure access for all people in the NWT. This means services available based on need. As well, there must be better co-ordination with partners so people have one point of contact for all labour market needs. Finally, it is clear that the availability of services which support participation in work must be improved. All programs and services recognize the value of diversity in our society. Where necessary, special measures must be promoted to increase the participation and occupational range of equity groups.

Coherence

- **Programs and services must be co-ordinated among labour market partners to ensure access to the full range of employability supports needed by Northerners and to ensure efficient use of limited dollars.**

In a coherent system, all of the parts work together. The overall system operates as an integrated whole, rather than separate and disjointed components.

Roles and responsibilities are clear. People know where to go to get the help that they need and their needs can be met within the available program mix. Gaps and duplication in services are reduced or eliminated. The result is that individuals do not fall through cracks in the system but instead receive the full benefit of available programs.

Accountability

- **Programs and services must become more accountable to the people they serve, based on standards and quality, with a results orientation.**

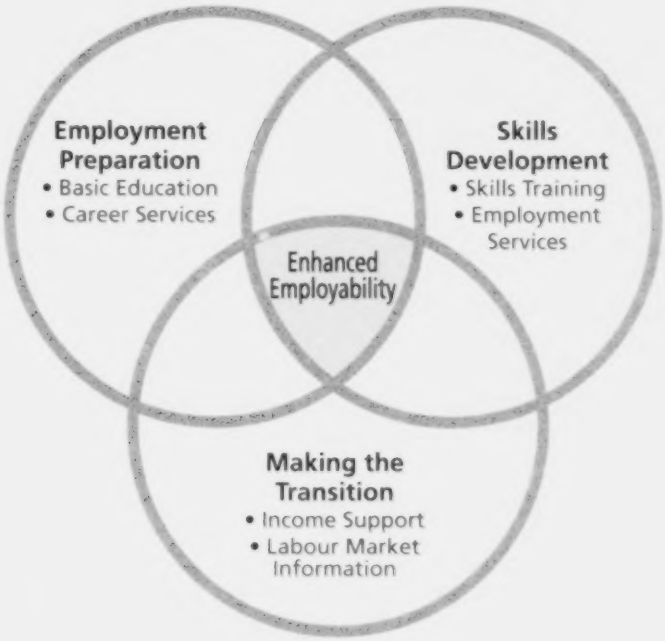
Effective training requires a system of accountability. Program standards and indicators must be established with both qualitative and quantitative outcomes being measured. Program evaluation and monitoring are necessary in order to achieve this level of accountability. Part of that evaluation includes follow up information on program participants to determine real benefits derived from the program or service.

The public, employers and governments want to make sure that they are getting the best value for their dollar. They want to know that programs and services are achieving the intended results. They want to make sure that skills acquired in school and training programs are marketable and transferable and will lead to employment or opportunities.

The Action Plan

Three critical areas for enhancing the employability of Northerners have been identified. These are broken into six sub-components and form the basis of the NWT Labour Force Development Plan:

Components of the Plan



Employment Preparation

The *Basic Education* component looks at what must be done to make sure people have the basic education and employability skills to be able to access employment. *Career Services* examines the important role of career development in helping people make informed decisions about training and employment options.

Skills Development

Skills Training examines ways in which people get job-specific skills through workplace, institutional or on the job training. *Employment Services* focuses on helping employers to find and keep suitable staff and on helping individuals to find and keep suitable employment.

Making the Transition

Income Support describes financial support programs for people participating in education or training programs. *Labour Market Information* provides current and accurate Northern information to support both individuals and organizations in effective planning.

Employment Preparation
- Basic Education
- Career Services

Goal

Individuals are provided with the basic education and employability skills to make successful transitions from school to work or further education and training.

Basic Education

Basic education is the foundation that people need for entering employment, skills training or post-secondary education. The Conference Board of Canada has defined a complete list of skills needed by workers into the 21st century. Briefly, they include literacy and numeracy, critical thinking and problem-solving, responsibility and adaptability, and teamwork and independent learning. These can be acquired through obtaining a high school education, completing adult basic education programs or through work experience.

A basic education allows people access and facilitates effective transitions to further education or work. Without it, people are less likely to be employed and more likely to be dependent on the social safety net to provide for their needs.

The Current Situation

Over the past decade considerable effort has been made to increase access to basic education opportunities. Currently, territorial youth can access programs through the school system. Specific efforts such as the Secondary Schooling Directive and resulting programming changes now mean that 87.5 percent of all Northern youth can access up to grade 12 in their home community. By 1999/2000, this will increase to 97 percent. Participation levels in high school programs will also continue to increase. Since 1990, rates of enrolment increased from 45 percent to 85 percent in 1996.

Adults in the Northwest Territories who did not complete their secondary education have a number of options for obtaining a grade 12 standing:

- The public colleges offer Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs leading to high school equivalency both on campus and in Community Learning Centres. ABE includes six levels of courses, ranging from literacy to course work at the advanced grade 12 level. ABE programs are individualized to meet the specific needs of the client. ABE courses may be taken on a full-time or part-time basis depending on the location.
- The public colleges have a flexible entry system in which students may take high school credit courses as part of their access year in diploma programs.
- The General Educational Development (GED) program provides a grade 12 equivalency based on prior learning and experience. The public colleges, and others, help people prepare to write the standardized GED exams and administer the exams.
- The University-College Entrance Program provides

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some Aboriginal students assistance to upgrade their skills before taking post-secondary programs.
- The Education Act entitles youth 21 years and under to return to high school at no cost. Adults returning to high school may be assessed fees.
- Correspondence courses, available through Divisional Education Councils, enable adults to take high school courses through independent study.

Other programs and services are available for adults who want to improve their literacy skills or need help to make the transition to post-secondary education or employment:

- The public colleges provide job readiness, life skills development and academic upgrading through campus pre-employment courses.
- The *Investing in People Strategy* provides people on social assistance opportunities to upgrade their basic education in their home community.
- Literacy tutoring and classes are available through Community Learning Centres and community-based literacy projects.
- Workplace literacy programs are being piloted with some employers.

In 1995-96 approximately 2,200 adults were enrolled in ABE, basic skills and literacy programs. GNWT funding for program costs and income support for learners was approximately $9 million. As well, the federal government provided approximately $4 million through literacy, course purchases and cost-shared programs for social assistance recipients.

Issues and Challenges

Notwithstanding advances made in the area of basic education provision, a number of issues remain. Some key challenges are:

- **Funding**
  Only 20 percent of participants are in programs with stable base funding.
- **Access**
  Broader access to various courses in the school system is required, particularly in communities where a limited number of students require training. ABE and literacy programs are not available in all communities. Participants' support payments differ depending on the program sponsor.
- **Delivery Methods**
  Because there is a broad range of needs, flexibility in program delivery is required to accommodate part-time learning, multimedia delivery, support for independent study and linkages to the workplace.
- **Effectiveness and Efficiency**
  Effective programs must be tailored to meet the needs of individuals and an investment in up-front assessment and counselling is critical to appropriate placement and follow up.
- **Quality**
  Basic education programs must become more results-based and adhere to established standards.

The Action Plan

Considerable progress has been made in improving basic education across the North. However, additional efforts are required. Some future directions include:

Policy and Strategic Initiatives

- developing an adult basic education policy which defines roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and ensures equitable access to ABE;
- developing standardized ABE curricula and quality standards appropriate to Northern communities and individuals to maximize student mobility between and beyond programming;
- strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal groups administering regional bi-lateral agreements to improve program development and coordination;
- rationalizing levels of income support for adult students with personal and family obligations;
- embarking on a renewed Stay-in-School campaign targeted at parents and students to encourage young people to complete their learning in the school system and reduce dependency on adult basic education programs;

Community Support Initiatives

- establishing senior secondary schooling up to grade 12 in every community with a population larger than 500 by 1999/2000;
- maximizing access to learning opportunities at the community level through use of new digital communication technologies;
- increased access to ABE services into all NWT communities;

Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)

- introducing a two year workplace literacy strategy resulting in a minimum of 100 Northerners with improved literacy skills and an increase in the number of employers offering literacy activities in the workplace;
- introducing 20 additional *Investing in People* community projects providing learning opportunities for 300 participants;
- training educators to effectively use technology based delivery methods and revising curricula to accommodate distance education medium, and
- piloting an innovative program to help those receiving income assistance raise their education levels and develop basic employability skills.

Expected Outcomes

- ✔ *Increased levels of basic education;*
- ✔ *Programs available in more communities;*
- ✔ *Consistent program standards throughout the NWT;*
- ✔ *Increased funding partnerships in community based program delivery; and*
- ✔ *Increased use of alternative delivery approaches.*

Career Services

Career development provides the foundation for successful transitions to employment by integrating the missions of the education and training systems through meaningful links between school and the world of work. It is a lifelong process during which individuals define the themes which connect and integrate their work experiences and achieve career related objectives. The need for career services is unlikely to be a unique event in a lifetime, but rather a service potentially needed every time an individual is in a new situation of transition to employment.

Good career development is synonymous with a good general education in that it seeks to develop a foundation of skills which will help people make informed decisions about, and find personal satisfaction in, their work and their lives. The goals of career development are:

- to help people acquire the skills, knowledge and attitudes to take control of their learning and life planning;
- to help people to make sense and take advantage of emerging career and labour market information; and
- to provide a process through which people can find a "best fit" between their values, interests and aptitudes and opportunities in the labour market.

Career services are based on the needs of individuals and encompass a wide range of activities such as assessment, counselling, career and labour market information, job search, career action planning and referral to more intensive counselling supports. Services can be provided in a variety of ways – individually or in groups, in person, by telephone, electronically or through a career centre.

All Northerners could benefit from a career action plan. When people have clearly defined goals, they have a rationale for, and a commitment to, developing themselves in ways which are personally meaningful. At the same time, they make education and training choices which lead to employment that

suits them, avoiding the expensive "trial and error" approach to career decision making.

The Current Situation

Career services are currently offered through a variety of institutions and agencies and by a number of different service providers such as:

- **NWT Schools**
  Teachers, School Community Counsellors and Guidance Counsellors offer services in the public education system through formalized courses such as Career and Life Management (CALM) and Career and Technology Studies (CTS) as well as individual counselling and classroom activities. All grade 9 students are required to develop a career and program plan which helps them set goals and make appropriate career and educational choices. These are revisited on an ongoing basis to keep the plans current and relevant.
- **GNWT Career Centres**
  Six regional storefront career centres in Inuvik, Cambridge Bay, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit, and four satellite offices in Fort Simpson, Hay River, Norman Wells and Igloolik offer self-directed and counsellor assisted career services to the general public.
- **Human Resources Development Canada**
  Through Canada Employment Centres, the unemployed are provided with counselling and job search assistance.
- **Public Colleges**
  Aurora College and Nunavut Arctic College provide personal and career counselling to students attending their respective institutions. In communities, Adult Educators provide career development services to students and community members.
- **Non-Government Organizations**
  Organizations like the YWCA, Council For Disabled and Association for Community Living provide services to special needs groups.

Issues and Challenges

At present, the provision of career services is primarily driven by organizational mandates. A comprehensive approach to service provision is not established. Issues and challenges include:

- **Lack of Co-ordination and Integration**
  Because services are not currently integrated between labour market partners, the result is program gaps, duplication of efforts and client confusion about where to go for what service.
- **Access**
  People in larger centres have greater and more consistent access to services while people in smaller communities have only itinerant services. As well, services are often targeted to specific client groups while the general public is afforded limited access. The difference in access to career services between those receiving income support and those not receiving any assistance must be eliminated. Service must be based on individual needs and not on the type of income support a person is receiving.
- **Training**
  Many service deliverers do not have sufficient training in career development to provide quality counselling.
- **Limited Resources**
  No one government or agency has sufficient resources to provide a complete range of services in all communities.

The Action Plan

Over the past five years it has been recognized that career development is a key element in the successful transition to employment. As a result the foundation for quality career development services has been established. The following initiatives will extend career development principles and practices within the labour market system:

Policy and Strategic Initiatives

- establishing stronger linkages between career development in the school system and adult learning by developing a policy and directive which spans the whole learning system;
- integrating career service delivery with Human Resources Development Canada, either through collocation efforts, or by assuming greater responsibility for these services through the proposed partnership agreements with the federal government;
- making career action plans a precondition of access to education and training programs as well as income support;

Community Support Initiatives

- mobilizing services to smaller communities by training community helpers like Adult Educators, School Community Counsellors and Income Support Workers in career development;
- identifying opportunities for community delivery of career services through block transfer agreements or decentralization of Career Development Services to smaller centres;

Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)

- developing an integrated career counselling certificate program for delivery by the public colleges, both through distance and on campus based methods;
- formalizing the Career Transitions Component of Career and Technology Studies (CTS) to ensure the integration of career development with existing school curricula;
- block funding the campuses of the public college to develop and provide an array of services such as job search skills and recruiting fairs to assist college students with the transition to employment;
- piloting a project to provide career counselling services to communities through the Internet; and
- expanding the Career and Technology Studies program in high schools to include a broader range of occupations so students have more work experience option.

Expected Outcomes

- ✔ *Increased high school participation rates;*
- ✔ *Better return on education and training investments;*
- ✔ *Better links for adults and youth between work and education;*
- ✔ *More people setting and achieving career goals; and*
- ✔ *Smoother transitions from school to work or further education.*

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Goal

An adaptable Northern workforce with the skills to participate in the traditional or wage economy.

Skills Training

Today's workers can no longer expect to acquire one set of skills in their youth which will last a lifetime. Current statistics suggest that workers will hold an average of seven different jobs over the course of their careers. The key to getting and keeping a job is to constantly update skills or obtain new ones. This is called multi-skilling and allows people to move from one job to another.

The need for a "portfolio" of skills is reinforced by a changing work dynamic. The basic relationships that govern the way employers and employees interacted in the workplace over the past twenty years have been significantly altered. Economists have labelled the current improvement in the Canadian economy as a jobless recovery because many employers are seeking other, non-standard methods of completing work. The traditional view of an employer providing long-term employment has given way to new work alternatives such as job sharing, work sharing, part-time and casual employment, self-employment, contracting, consulting and entrepreneurship. If workers are to derive the benefits of a changing work dynamic, they must become more entrepreneurial in nature to secure and maintain employment.

There are many ways in which people develop skills to respond to the changing world of work – informally through volunteer work, home making activities, hobbies and land based pursuits. Formal skills training occurs through a variety of processes including:

- classroom instruction where individuals are provided with a formal course of study;
- on the job training where individuals are provided with training while performing job related activities;
- self-directed study and practice where individuals are provided with a course of study to complete on their own or with assistance from supervisors, mentors or others; and
- any combination of the above.

Current Situation

Skills training is provided by several organizations in the Northwest Territories – Aurora College, Nunavut Arctic College, employers, professional associations, private schools and trainers, Aboriginal organizations and government departments. The major opportunities for training are as follows:

Skills Development
- Skills Training
- Employment Services

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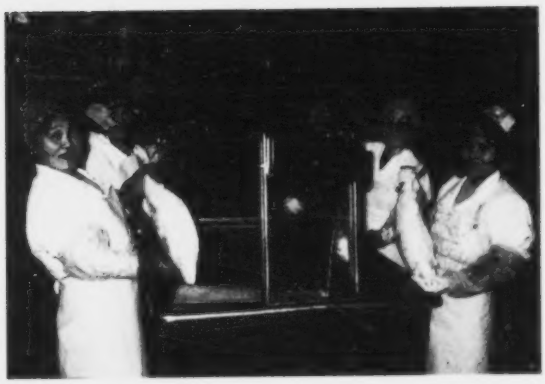

- **Institutional Training**
  Institutional training programs are those where the majority of training occurs at school through classroom or practical instruction. The public colleges offer 16 certificate and diploma programs in Nunavut and 12 programs in the West. Students must pay tuition fees but are eligible for Student Financial Assistance. Where programs are not offered in the North, students attend university and college programs in other jurisdictions. Private vocational schools and Aboriginal organizations may also offer skill training.

- **Workplace Learning**
  The majority of instruction for workplace learning programs takes place on the job. Industry, GNWT and the colleges work together to design, deliver and certify training.

  Apprenticeship is the best known work-based training program. The NWT has approximately 460 apprentices registered in 42 trades in the industrial, construction and service sectors. Employers provide training on the job, the public colleges and Southern colleges provide classroom instruction, and the GNWT provides the administration under the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupations Certification Act.

  The GNWT Apprenticeship Training Assistance and Training on the job programs provide training subsidies to employers who hire and train new workers on the job. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment works with employers to develop the training and recognizes the training through certification.

  Apprenticeship training is also being piloted in the high schools this year through the Schools North Apprenticeship Program (SNAP).

  The public colleges work with industry to deliver custom-designed training for employees. This training is done on a fee-for-service basis to meet the specific needs of employers.

  The *Investing in People Strategy* provides work-based training opportunities for social assistance recipients through work experience projects.

  The *Building and Learning Strategy* provides on the job training opportunities on GNWT capital construction projects.

- **Cooperative Education**
  Cooperative education programs provide an integrated method of applying academic learning to the world of work. They help people understand the value of work, workers' rights and responsibilities, and employers' expectations. They also allow people to gain valuable skills and work experience while obtaining their education. Current research demonstrates higher retention rates in programs that allow students to directly apply their learning. Currently, high schools and the public colleges offer a limited range of cooperative programs in the NWT.

- **Industry Training**
  Activities that employers, unions and professional associations undertake on their own to provide training. In 1991, between one-half and three-quarters of Canadian private sector companies provided some kind of structured training to their employees. The larger the firm, the more likely it is to support training initiatives. Most employer-sponsored training focused on job orientation and government-regulated training about health and safety issues, as well as professional development seminars. For example, as the largest employer in the North, the GNWT has developed the Public Service Career Training Program (PSCTP) to provide training and career opportunities at the officer level.

Issues and Challenges

As the workplace is changing, Northerners must become more skilled. The traditional view of an employer providing long-term employment has given way to new work alternatives such as job sharing, worksharing, part-time/casual employment, self-employment, contracting, consulting and entrepreneurship. Clearly what people will need to participate in the new work dynamic is a portfolio of skills, not one skill set for one occupation. Key challenges in skills training are:

- **Transferability of Credits and Skills**
  Ways to enable learners to build on their previous education, training and work or life experience must be found. This could mean better provisions to give students advanced college standing, to recognize credentials, and to provide linkages between programs and institutions.

- **Responsiveness to Industry Needs and Opportunities**
  Technology will change the skills required by employees in almost all occupations. For example, machine operators are becoming less involved in "hands-on" skills and more involved in monitoring and controlling electronic equipment. In some specialized trades, workers will need frequent retraining to keep up with technical developments, developing new skills to replace those becoming outdated. Employers and training institutions must be prepared to adjust their programs to reflect the new skills that are required.

  Strong partnerships between training institutions and industry will be key in responding to these challenges.

- **Flexibility in Program Delivery**
  Training programs must become more competency-based rather than time-based. Many learners cannot leave their jobs, family responsibilities or home communities to attend school on a full-time basis. Multimedia and distance technologies offer possibilities, as do approaches that allow students to move through programs at their own pace. Access to training on a part-time basis is also important to some learners.

- **Prior Learning and Recognition**
  Recognizing skills learned through informal methods is important for the adult learner in that it emphasizes learning outcomes rather than the process of education. It offers a bridge from the student's current position to his or her goal and promotes transition into, or progress within, the labour force. Currently there is no formal method to recognize skills obtained through prior learning.

  Developing a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) System will improve accessibility and efficiency of the learning system, shifting the learning process from time-based to skill-based. Learners are therefore not required to obtain skills they already have.

- **Support of Traditional Pursuits**
  In small communities, the pursuit of traditional activities is often an alternative to the wage economy, or provides a supplement to many households. However, many people do not have or have lost their skills in this area and need help to develop them. Attitudes must be changed so that traditional pursuits are recognized as 'real' jobs. Support must be provided for the development of traditional skills through programs – both on the land and within learning institutions.

- **Changes to Program Support**
  Recently, funding to support training has changed. For example, federal support for apprenticeship in-school training has been virtually eliminated. Changes under the new Employment Insurance Act will eliminate many of the financial supports to apprentices to attend school. New shared partnerships must be developed where individuals, employers and governments share the costs for program delivery. Alternative approaches to the delivery and scheduling of in-school training which are competency-based or modular must also be explored.

The Action Plan

Effective skill training is one of the most critical elements of a labour force development plan. There has been significant development of the necessary infrastructure to support skill development in the North based on Northern needs. Further work is required for:

Policy and Strategic Initiatives

- improving program accountability within government and the college system by making funding for new programs contingent upon a demonstrated labour market need;
- broadening community access of base funded college programs by rotating locations for delivery;
- instituting a formal Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition System to recognize skills of adult learners obtained through informal methods;
- researching the possibility of adding a Technical Preparation program option to high school curricula which will have linkages to the public college system;
- instituting Territorial Training Awards for employers showing exemplary commitment to training;
- developing sector specific training plans based on industry needs;

Community Support Initiative

- modifying existing programs to include the acquisition of traditional as well as workplace skills;

Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)

- improving access to existing jobs by providing more training in professional and technical fields such as Engineering Technology;
- providing more post-secondary programs in mining from pre-employment to skilled trades so that Northerners are prepared for new opportunities in the industry;
- developing a co-op based stream of the Management Studies Program – Public Sector;
- expanding the Co-op Education initiative by granting credits for high school co-op experiences at the college level and establishing stronger linkages with the business community to improve the quality of co-op programs;
- increasing trades related training to meet the human resource needs of the mining sector;
- supporting a summer student career development program linking education and work experience in the public service;
- expanding the Schools North Apprenticeship Program models to include more occupations at the secondary school level; and
- changing the Apprenticeship System to enhance competency-based rather than time-based activity.

Expected Outcomes

- ✔ *More opportunities for people to develop skills needed for current and future employment;*
- ✔ *Programs and services responsive to labour market needs;*
- ✔ *Improved access to technical level training; and*
- ✔ *A more economic and efficient training system.*

Employment Services

Employment services help employers find and retain suitable employees, and help individuals find and maintain suitable employment. Individuals, as well as employers, can benefit from a range of services which include income supplements, self-employment assistance, job placement and referral services, human resource planning and on the job support. Setting occupational standards is another essential component of a system promoting workforce training.

Adjustment Services

These services focus on an individual client and their particular labour market need. They may be short or long-term in nature and include:

- assessment and career counselling;
- job finding clubs;
- mobility assistance – financial assistance to find a job in another location;
- outreach services for people in small communities;
- equity measures to help particular groups with access to employment (Aboriginal, female, disabled); and
- wage subsidies to encourage employers to hire individuals with employment barriers.

Job Creation

The goal of these measures is to provide work experience while stimulating community economic development. Specific job creation measures include:

- short-term job creation;
- project-based training related to community needs;
- self-employment assistance;
- wage subsidies used to create jobs; and
- earning supplements used to top up income support payments.

Occupational Standards

These standards describe what individuals have to do and know to perform various tasks or jobs, and the level of knowledge or performance required. The aim of occupational standard development is to improve the integration of industry or community needs and the learning system. Setting standards contributes to the effectiveness of labour force development and improved accountability in the total learning system. Accountability is shared among learners, training providers, standards setters, purchasers of training and funding agencies.

The clear definition of occupational standards has other potential benefits. It supports the mobility of workers from one area to another and from one employer to another. From a labour perspective, it is very important that standards be met Canada-wide and that different jurisdictions recognize workers who meet the standards. Clear occupational standards can also help make learning more portable and can enable an effective assessment of prior learning.

Current Situation

Employment services are offered primarily through employers, GNWT Regional Career Centres and through federal Employment Centres. Human resource planning services on mega-projects, sectoral initiatives and the administration of apprenticeship and occupational standards and certification are offered through the Career Development Division of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Examples of employment services and programs include:

- **Training on the job Program**
  $1.3 million in wage subsidies for Northern employers to cover the costs of on-site training and seat purchases for institutional training.
- **Apprenticeship Training Assistance**
  $1.3 million in wage subsidies for Northern employers who hire and train apprentices to journeyman level of competence.
- **Canada-NWT Infrastructure Program**
  During the past three years, $10.7 million has been made available in federal/territorial funding to revitalize community infrastructure and provide employment opportunities. Discussions are underway considering an extension of the program for 1997-98.
- **Earning Supplements**
  Income support recipients may be entitled to supplemental funding if they are engaged in training or work activities.

- **Human Resource Planning**
  The GNWT has developed two resources to support human resource planning in the NWT – "Snapshot of the Nunavut Labour Market" and "Snapshot of the Western NWT Labour Market". These have been widely distributed throughout the North.
- A number of human resource studies have been completed on the mining industry to ensure Northerners are able to take advantage of existing and new opportunities.

Issues and Challenges

The following key areas need to be addressed in order to provide effective employment services:

- **Human Resource Planning**
  Human resource planning is an essential tool for identifying an employer's needs and designing internal policies and practices. Human resource needs must be conveyed to governments, post-secondary institutions and communities who can use the information to design programs or develop people to suit the jobs.
- **Access and Delivery**
  People who are out of work and need help want the right services at the right time. The best capability for making decisions about those services often lies with those who are most directly affected – the businesses, workers and others involved in the local labour market. These groups need a greater opportunity to jointly develop solutions to the problems they face.

There are a number of employment development initiatives that communities could undertake to improve local economies. Many people who find themselves out of work have the skills, ideas and entrepreneurial drive to create their own employment and may need capital to start a new business. In communities where few employment opportunities exist, self-employment assistance may be the optimal choice for the individual, and an economic stimulus for the community itself. Another option would be to provide wages for unemployed workers to perform useful work in their communities which would otherwise be left undone.

For communities to do this, they need greater control of the resources currently devoted to employment development. The GNWT's move toward community empowerment means that not only will communities have greater authority to develop and implement programs at the local level, but also more jobs will be devolved to communities to ensure they are resourced to take on the functions.

- **Co-ordination**
  While some progress has been made in the co-ordination of services delivered by HRDC and GNWT Career Centres and other services, there is potential for overlap, duplication and gaps in employment services.
- **Employment Insurance Legislation**
  The new federal benefits will apply generally to unemployed people who have been on unemployment insurance in the last three years. New measures will be introduced including wage subsidies to employers, earnings supplements for individuals, self-employment assistance and job-creation partnerships. The GNWT and HRDC are currently negotiating implementation of these measures.

The Action Plan

Employment services will be strengthened through implementation of the following strategies:

Policy and Strategic Initiatives

- negotiating a new partnership agreement with the federal government to deliver employment services through single window access;
- establishing labour force development boards in the east and west with representation from business, labour, interest groups, education and the public sector to ensure relevant and timely labour market programs and information;
- developing NWT occupational standards/ certification for sectors in compliance with existing national standards (i.e. tourism, mining);
- developing occupational standards for education occupations such as child care workers, school community counsellors;
- developing "How To" booklets for human resources planning and effective training, recruitment, and selection practices for use by communities and employers;

Community Support Initiatives

- increasing community capacity to develop and manage employment development through training and education efforts;
- providing wage subsidies for community works programs (e.g. cleaning up the environment) ensuring gender equity;
- extending the community based Canada-NWT infrastructure program to 1997-98;
- transferring employment services to communities;
- providing communities with the technology to conduct skills inventories at the local levels;
- promoting job sharing, volunteerism, home based business and other alternative models to accommodate the diverse economy in the NWT;
- developing community profiles to enhance local planning;

Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)

- providing training incentives to occupational sectors demonstrating the greatest potential for growth; and
- providing training incentives to small and medium-sized business to train existing employees.

Expected Outcomes

- ✔ *More employment opportunities at the local level;*
- ✔ *Communities with the skills and resources to manage programs;*
- ✔ *Enhanced role for employers in planning;*
- ✔ *More opportunities for developing partnerships in labour force development; and*
- ✔ *Better quality and standardized training.*

MAKING THE TRANSITION

Goal

To ensure people have sufficient information and support to make the transition to employment.

Making the Transition
- Income Support
- Labour Market Information

Income and Personal Support Services

Sometimes, people in transition require additional support beyond education and skill development to help them in achieving goals. These supports include financial and personal assistance and help with finding and using labour market information.

Income Support Services

Income support provides individuals with the financial support they need for basic living, child care and tuition, books and access to training institutions. There are three major sources of income support available to Northerners – Employment Insurance (EI), Income Support and Student Financial Assistance (SFA). In transition situations, many Northerners access some or all of these programs and often more than once in a lifetime.

- **Employment Insurance**
  On average, 1,700 unemployed workers receive EI monthly, the majority of them from the Western Arctic. Last year, the federal government paid out $32.6 million in EI benefits to unemployed workers in the NWT. This was a reduction of 20 percent (or $8 million) from 1993 because of changes in program eligibility and level of benefits. New legislation was passed in July 1996, to restructure the Unemployment Insurance Program and create the current Employment Insurance system in an attempt to modernize Canada's social safety net. The changes will take effect in two phases, beginning July 1996 and January 1997. Significant changes for those accessing the program include lower maximum weekly benefits, lower benefits for repeat users and a shorter collection period.

- **Income Support**
  The Income Support Program of the GNWT provides support to those in financial need to cover basic costs of living. Over the past five years the costs have increased by an average of 9 percent per year. Over the decade, from 1984 to 1994, program costs have quadrupled from $9 million to $34 million. In the past, the program structure fostered client dependency on both program staff and funding by addressing the individual's financial need rather than helping build skills and abilities to engage in productive activities.

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To establish stronger linkages between financial support, education and training opportunities, the program was transferred from the Department of Health and Social Services in April 1995, to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. At the same time, consultations began with communities and other interest groups to determine how to reform the program to make it more financially sustainable while helping people move toward independence and self-sufficiency. A redesign of the program has now been implemented. The revised program emphasizes active involvement in career decision-making and participation in productive choices.

- **Student Financial Assistance Program**
  This program provides grants and loans to NWT residents to complete post-secondary education and prepare for jobs in the North. Depending on the number of years of NWT schooling and ethnicity, the program can provide grants for transportation, tuition, books and living allowances. The program also provides remissible and non-remissible loans for students not eligible for grants or living allowances.

The program has been expanding rapidly since 1991, when 1,107 students accessed a total of $7.5 million in grants, loans and scholarships. In the 1994-95 academic year, 1,849 students accessed $15.6 million. The most significant growth in students has been among the Aboriginal population. The program may exceed $18 million in expenditures this year.

Personal Support Services

Personal support services are defined as the personal, attitudinal and situational support services required to enhance a person's employability. Examples are child care, equipment and facilities for people with disabilities, and multilingual information and services. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides the following personal support programs to help those in need make the transition to employment:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP)**
  The Department of Education, Culture and Employment currently provides funding to the Council for Disabled to administer the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Program to help those with disabilities to become employed. Approximately 20 individuals are serviced annually through this program and supports range from specialized computers to tutoring and course purchases. The budget for individualized services through VRDP is $45,000, cost shared by the federal and territorial governments.

- **Early Childhood/Daycare Supports**
  Parents are the primary caregivers for children. However, it is sometimes necessary for parents to use childcare services while they are working or are in training programs. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides support to low income parents engaged in work or training through the Child Care User Subsidy. This needs assessed program provides for the costs of daycare in both licensed and unlicensed facilities while the parent attends school or is at work. To ensure quality care of children, ECE licenses and provides financial and other program supports to childcare facilities under the NWT Child Daycare Act and Standards Regulations support. In addition to ensuring the health, safety and security of children, quality childcare also means supporting child development opportunities through age and culturally appropriate learning activities. The best future for the NWT labour force starts with early childhood development of today's children.

The Current Situation

A number of income and personal support services have recently been reviewed. These include:

- **Employment Insurance**
  Changes to EI legislation will have an impact on the NWT and will likely result in increased usage of Income Support as eligibility becomes restricted.

Intensive services to clients will be limited to those in receipt of EI and there will be an overall loss of training in the NWT funded by Canada.

- **Income Support**
  The program has been reformed from a passive income support to a program that links receipt of funds to productive choices. These choices include activities such as wellness, jobs, education, traditional pursuits, training and parenting. Participants become active partners in setting and achieving career and education goals and continue to receive benefits while developing skills and achieving greater self-sufficiency. The result is more than 5000 people will participate productively within their communities. The revised Income Support Program was implemented on January 1, 1997. The main components of the reformed program are conditional access, community delivery, basic benefits for transitional clients, case management of clients, incentives for adults, youth accessing productive choices and increased benefits for elders and people with disabilities.

- **Student Financial Assistance**
  A review of the program has recently been completed with the objective of ensuring financial sustainability and continued access. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is currently considering the options for program revisions. Once decisions have been made, changes will be implemented in the 1998-99 academic year.

  At the same time, efforts to decentralize SFA are currently underway. Services to students, such as counselling and completion of application forms, are now available in communities while direct administration remains centralized.

- **Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons**
  The federal government is currently reviewing service delivery to disabled Canadians through a series of national consultations. The review includes the VRDP programs. Once completed, decisions will be made regarding future programming and services to people with disabilities. In the interim, agreements are being negotiated with the federal government to continue VRDP for this fiscal year.

- **Early Childhood/Daycare Supports**
  To ensure the best possible care for children, the User Subsidy Program has been separated from the early childhood component of overall daycare programming. Where the user subsidy is a financial support to parents, early childhood programming focuses on quality developmental activities for children. The User Subsidy Program is being integrated into the Income Support Program and was fully decentralized to Regional ECE Offices April 1, 1996.

Issues and Challenges

The main challenges concerning income and personal support are:

- **Managing the Costs**
  Demand on income support programs continues to rise as more people access them. Costs are becoming prohibitive in light of reduced budgets.

- **Inconsistency in Levels of Student Assistance**
  Many student support programs have different levels of assistance which may be based on need, membership in a designated group, or eligibility criteria. There is no common definition of what is a reasonable or acceptable level of student support, regardless of the program in which students are enrolled.

- **Lack of Coherence**
  Students attending Adult Basic Education classes, or other programs shorter than 12 weeks, are not eligible for support through Student Financial Assistance. Funding must be obtained through the Income Support Program, Pathways or other sources. Student support programs are not integrated nor do they always support a sequential acquisition of skills.

The Action Plan

In order to ensure Northerners have the necessary supports to make the transition to employment the following is required:

Policy and Strategic Initiatives

- working closely with the federal government to redefine roles and responsibilities in labour force development to improve client access to programs and services while eliminating duplication;
- providing single window access to federal/ territorial programs and services;
- integrating and harmonizing GNWT income support programs, where possible;
- reviewing the approach to financial support for adults in ABE programs;
- encouraging the federal government to support the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons program at existing or increased levels of funding;
- reviewing supports provided by governments and identifying those with the greater cost benefit;

Community Support Initiatives

- increasing the role of communities in setting direction for, and delivery of, Income Support Programs;
- providing training at the community level for helping professionals working with at risk children and their families;
- supporting communities in developing licensed and quality child care through a combination of professional development services, start up and operations grants and contributions and working with other funding agencies to develop a coherent daycare system across the NWT; and

Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)

- examining the potential for development of a Career Development Loan fund for workers and non-workers on a needs assessed basis who do not meet current requirements for other income support programs. Repayments would be based on current salary. The GNWT would pay interest on the loan while the recipient attended school.

Expected Outcomes

- ✔ *Improved access to programs and services;*
- ✔ *More equitable levels of student assistance;*
- ✔ *More supported opportunities for skill development; and*
- ✔ *Improved access to daycare supports.*

Labour Market Information

A critical support to labour force development is accessible, readable, Northern labour market information. Labour market information is any information that exists on work and how it is structured. It may be presented in a formal style, such as in Statistics Quarterly, or in an informal style such as a newspaper article on the opening of a new mine in the NWT.

Labour market information has been referred to as the "lifeblood" of labour force development. It provides workers with information on employers' short and long-term staffing needs and gives employers information about the existing pool of workers. Labour market information also gives direction to the education system about appropriate programming. It helps people with career decision making, communities and governments to determine the kinds of training programs needed, and helps to establish effective career and employment counselling services. It is also needed for community development and human resource planning. All Northerners, from individuals to employers to policy makers, can benefit from labour market information.

The Current Situation

In the North, labour market information is not as accessible nor comprehensive as it could be. Often it is presented as statistical data which many people have difficulty reading and understanding. More could be done to develop publications in a user friendly format. Also, there are information gaps. For example, a great deal is known about the characteristics of the labour force, but very little about employers and their needs in the NWT. We do not know, to any level of detail, which jobs will be most in demand in the future.

Follow up information on program participants is an important part of labour market information. It tells us whether people have benefited from a training course or service such as career counselling or a university program. Currently, insufficient data is collected and we do not always know whether programs are meeting their objectives.

Many people are involved in collecting and disseminating labour market information including a variety of departments within the federal and territorial government and the public colleges.

Issues and Challenges

The main issues concerning useful, reliable labour market information are:

- **Quality of Information**
  If training programs and services are to be responsive to labour market needs, current and accurate labour market information is critical to planning. There is a need to develop a system of data collection capable of incorporating up to date information as it occurs. In particular, the system must focus on ways to retrieve information from employers on their needs. They are best positioned to determine where mismatches are developing or likely to occur.

- **Presentation of Information**
  Labour market information must be presented to user groups in a readable manner. Plain language publications are essential if they are to be valuable, particularly at the community level. As well, many people do not know how to use information for planning purposes and more education and training on how to use this information must be made available.

- **Fragmentation**
  There is little co-ordination among the agencies that collect labour market information. As a result, there is no co-ordinated, synthesized overview of labour market needs. This makes identification of training requirements and opportunities difficult and also creates problems for updating information.

The Action Plan

In order to improve the quality, readability and co-ordination of labour market information, these efforts are required:

Policy & Strategic Initiatives

- establishing a forum for employers, communities and governments to work together to identify opportunities and options for meeting the needs of the labour market;
- developing a human resource plan for the western public service which is comparable to the recently completed plan for Nunavut;
- conducting an NWT employers survey to obtain current information on employment by type, salaries by occupation group, recruitment practices and staffing needs;
- making better use of resources by establishing an intergovernmental Labour Market Information Committee whose job will be to set priorities, share information and develop plain language resources;
- creating a Northern Employability Skills Profile and using the information to develop curricula and improve training programs and services;

Community Support Initiatives

- developing and publishing an annual newspaper which provides NWT economic and labour market information for the public;

Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)

- completing a series of Sector Booklets which give information about the kinds of jobs and potential opportunities within a variety of NWT sectors such as tourism, mining, oil and gas, and the public service;
- conducting studies on graduate placement to determine if graduates have found jobs in their course of study and establishing better indicators for training programs to determine effectiveness;
- setting up electronic job boards within Career Centres to display opportunities for workers; and
- using existing labour market information to develop career development resources that will help people to make career decisions. This could include occupational trends information as well as the aptitudes and interests needed for those jobs, educational requirements and the nature of the work.

Expected Outcomes

- ✔ *Improved access to current, comprehensive Northern labour market information;*
- ✔ *More responsive training and employment programs;*
- ✔ *Improved capacity for human resource planning, both territorially and at the community level; and*
- ✔ *Better individual career decision making.*

New Roles and Responsibilities in Labour Force Development

Implementing the Labour Force Development Plan requires the commitment and effort of all parties involved in developing the labour force. The strategies outlined in this document will produce fundamental change in the roles, functions and activities of all stakeholders. To be truly effective and economical, labour force development activities must build on the partnerships that currently exist and strive to establish new ones. Enhancing the employability of the Northern population is a shared responsibility. It begins with the individual and is supported by communities, educational institutions, governments, and business and industry working together to provide coherent and responsive programs and services to meet the diversity of needs within the NWT.

The benefits of a collective approach are many. Scarce resources can be pooled to ensure maximum value from training dollars. Policies and practices can be developed which work together to eliminate duplication and improve efficiency. The experiences and expertise of the people who know a great deal about employment issues can be tapped and strategies that will work at the local, regional and territorial level can be developed.

In the past, governments have taken primary responsibility for labour force development. This is no longer desirable nor within current fiscal capabilities. With the establishment of new partnership arrangements comes an opportunity to redefine our roles and responsibilities and to work collectively toward common goals. Although change takes time, a partnership is envisioned in which:

- *Individuals* have responsibility for their own educational, training and employment choices, have the skills, knowledge and motivation to set and achieve career goals, and are prepared to keep learning throughout their lives. As well, they will be expected to contribute a greater proportion of the costs of their education and training, in accordance with the benefits they receive.
- *Employers* take the lead role in the development of their workforce, invest in the development of existing employees, provide entry opportunities for new workers, adopt practices of equity, work with government to establish occupational standards, provide input into post-secondary curricula to enhance program relevancy, develop human resource plans, and develop partnerships with schools to increase relevancy.
- *Communities* play an active role in defining local needs and priorities, in communicating these needs to education and training providers, and in developing and managing programs and service delivery at the local level. Communities come in a variety of forms. They may be geographic, political such as Nunavut, cultural like the Dogrib people or statutory such as the Kitikmeot Divisional Education Council.
- *Educational institutions* are accountable to students and the public for delivery of quality programs and services, are evaluated on the basis of results achieved, graduate students with the basic academic and employability skills needed to access jobs, and offer programs more responsive to the needs of the individual, community and the economy.
- *Governments* take an active leadership role in setting policy and direction for labour force development based on input from partners. They provide tools and resources to employers, the public and communities such as labour market information, monitor and support labour market activities and developments and place an emphasis on standards and results. Governments must make a concerted effort to adopt programs that are financially sustainable, move towards longer term, preventative approaches to development, and advocate equity practices and workplace innovation. Finally, government must continue to take primary responsibility for the education of residents and overall labour force development planning.

These definitions of roles and responsibilities have changed over the years. A balanced view which includes a significant contribution from all partners is seen as essential to long-term labour force development.

Linking Community and Labour Force Development

Better, more relevant decision making happens closer to the people who know the situation well and can develop strategies for meeting their own needs. The Government of the NWT has made a commitment to devolve as much of the program planning and decision making to the community level as is appropriate and desired.

In the context of labour force development, this means that local governments will have increased roles and responsibilities in planning, developing, supporting and monitoring initiatives which are directly linked to their communities.

Through the Community Empowerment Initiative, actions will be taken to support communities in taking on greater responsibility for local control of programs and services. This means communities are prepared to:

- control and administer local programs;
- identify priorities and set standards;
- manage community affairs through a consolidated administrative structure and block funding for programs and services; and
- account for the results to the people they serve.

Government also recognizes that communities and individuals must be healthy before they can meet the challenges of greater responsibility. The Community Wellness Initiative positioned communities to solve their own problems and design and deliver their own wellness programs. This year, community expenditures will be focused on supporting children and their families toward good health and development.

These initiatives form the foundation for change in how labour force development is implemented in the NWT. While the Labour Force Development Plan is a broad government initiative, many of the programs and services described, as well as the resources, can be managed at the local level. A process is already underway to examine what interests the government should retain and what programs and services should be made available to communities once they are ready.

Communities, through various funding arrangements, will have the flexibility to apply funding to areas where it is needed most. They will be able to better utilize human resources by assigning a variety of related duties as opposed to being bound by specific mandates. For example, the economic development officer could also take on responsibility for training and employment programs. At the same time, opportunities for partnerships and program coherence are increased in that decision makers are accessible, and there is a greater potential to eliminate duplication or fill gaps in service delivery. Development of the local labour force is a manageable goal when flexibility, innovation, sufficient resources, and trained administrators come together.

To identify the policies, practices and supports communities need from government to effectively plan and deliver labour market services, the roles and responsibilities of each must be clearly defined.

Although broadly set out in the preceding chapter, in relation to community empowerment the territorial government could take a leadership role in:

- preparing guidelines on the organizational development process;
- establishing, training and supporting local labour force development boards who make decisions about appropriate training, career development and employment programs in their communities;
- helping determine community development priorities;
- developing guidelines on using labour market information to identify opportunities;
- developing and distributing labour market information;
- training local people in human resource and career development practices;
- developing a database for human resource skills inventories and training to operationalize and maintain it;
- providing program information and budgets to assist in negotiating multiple funding arrangements;

- training in program development, monitoring and evaluation; and
- supporting to ensure administrative competence.

Concurrently, communities will have to:

- determine the nature of the administrative body which will take on responsibility for labour force development;
- establish community and labour force development goals and priorities;
- identify needed resources;
- identify required training needs and supports; and
- establish timelines and processes for assuming full control.

The Community Empowerment Action Plan focuses on assisting communities in developing plans that guide development in all areas including assessing their own capacity and supporting training to address capacity needs to help communities achieve their objectives. This community assessment process could lay the groundwork for the development of local labour force plans based on identified gaps in overall community skill sets.

With the proper supports and resources, labour force planning and implementation of policies and programs to positively influence the labour market can be done effectively at the local level.

Resourcing the Plan – Possible Approaches

The demand for labour force development programs and services is increasing. This trend is likely to continue given our youthful population. However, financial resources are limited. Faced with this fact, governments must find innovative ways to increase efficiency while maintaining economy. Whatever the outcome, one thing is clear – developing Northern workers is a shared responsibility and there will be limited funding to do it. Communities, businesses, industry, claimant groups and all levels of government must work together, combining resources to maximize our investment in human resource development and to ensure a successful rate of return on that investment.

In developing labour force development activities, it will be necessary to make investments based upon several key measures. First, activities selected should show a direct cost benefit. Depending on the circumstances these benefits may be short or long-term. Wherever possible, initiatives which provide long-term benefits should prevail. Second, cost effectiveness, integration of programs, reduced administrative costs and measurable program results must all be elements in establishing priorities. Third, cost sharing among labour force development partners is critical. Sharing increases commitment and distributes costs more broadly. Finally, a cost recovery approach must be considered, particularly where enhanced services are provided.

Specific approaches for resourcing the plan include:

- Governments are becoming less able to "manage" the labour market as more stakeholders become involved in the planning and delivery of training, education and employment programs. Because communities are best positioned to make decisions about local labour market needs and to co-ordinate funding at the local level, direct community involvement in program management will occur. Transfers to communities will be based on financial agreements in which the principles of, and accountabilities for, labour market development are identified and monitored. The federal government is already moving in this direction by establishing bilateral agreements with Aboriginal groups to deliver $12 million in training annually. The co-ordination of funding at the local level ensures maximum flexibility and responsiveness and eliminates any duplication and gaps that may exist.

  Many communities may not be ready right now to take on responsibility for comprehensive labour market development. Training and support will be provided to those communities through the Community Empowerment Initiative to help them through the transition to community control.

- Existing Income Support Programs will be linked to labour force development initiatives to support people while they work. All willing and able program recipients will make productive choices which lead toward increased self-sufficiency. These choices can include work, community service, traditional pursuits and wellness among others.

- A condition of access to government funding for training and employment may be linked to joint venturing. That is, government will contribute in partnership with another contributor/s to offset costs. Funding may also be established on diminishing rates. As employees gain skills, the level of funding decreases. As an example, employers might receive 50 percent in the first six months of a Training on the job contract and 25 percent for the remainder of the training contract.

Other approaches for funding activities need further examination such as;

- Voluntary individual training accounts could be established for public and private sector employees in which the individual, employer and government each contribute dollar for dollar to training or upgrading.
- Formalize labour market planning through the establishment of community training boards with representatives from the three levels of government, claimant groups and other appropriate partners to make co-ordinated

decisions about training in the community. This would eliminate existing duplication and encourage opportunities for cost sharing.

Defining approaches to fund labour force development is important. But it is also valuable to recognize existing activity and to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of existing monies by establishing priorities.

In addition to the $50 million the Department of Education, Culture and Employment spends on adult education and training, $2.4 million has been identified for 97/98 for new and enhanced labour force development initiatives. This includes investments in Career Counsellor training, workplace education, Investing in People program, the Building and Learning Strategy and Mine training.

This is a beginning. However, if an effective impact is to be made on long-term labour force development, a consistent effort will be required to address all elements of the plan. Defining the level of financial commitment required and identifying resources will be challenging. It is essential, however, if Northerners are to have access to a full range and mix of appropriate employment development supports.

The Next Steps – Plan Implementation

The Key Steps

The implementation of the Northwest Territories Labour Force Development Plan is the next step in the process. Implementation will require focused attention of government and particularly the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Within this framework, specific tasks will be focused upon:

- **Retargeting and Refocusing Programs and Services**
  In co-operation with our partners, a review of existing activities will occur to ensure that programs and services reflect the principles of this plan. This will likely result in shifting some of the existing resources to address high priority activities.
- **Clarifying Responsibilities**
  As has been noted, responsibilities in labour force development have changed during the past decade. In implementing this plan, the GNWT will take a lead role in ensuring all of the major partners involved in labour force development activity are knowledgeable about their responsibilities and recognize the importance of their contribution.
- **Increasing Planning and Co-ordination**
  Given the complexity of partner involvement in these activities, a focus will be placed on the development of systems which allow for effective co-ordination and collaboration. These efforts are essential if effective planning and delivery of programs and services is to occur.

Workplan

The responsibility for plan implementation will rest with the Minister, Deputy Minister and senior staff of the Department. Actions to reform labour force development activities will provide a major focus for developmental activity. As plan tasks will be carried out by a broad range of departmental staff, a variety of actions will proceed simultaneously.

Timeframe

This plan will provide the foundation for long-term labour force development. The plan itself is intended to address labour force development to 1999, with implementation beginning this year. However, the plan must have a capacity to cope with change. The plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis to refine strategies and, where necessary, to establish new approaches.

Evaluation

Some of the initiatives to be undertaken have a process orientation and mean a change to how things are currently done. Other initiatives are project or program based, and will result in changes to existing programs or the development of new ones.

Each of the project based initiatives will have a built-in evaluation process identified before the project begins. Additionally, a major review of the total implementation plan will be conducted on an annual basis. An evaluation framework will be developed to monitor progress and account for outcomes through the annual planning cycle.

A comprehensive review of the plan will be completed in 2000.

Implementation Plan

The tasks of the Implementation Plan are divided into the six strategic areas for action listed below. Timelines for activity are identified. All activities are listed in order of priority and are identified as either new projects or enhancements to existing programs or services.

- basic education;
- career services;
- skills training;
- employment services;
- income support services; and
- labour market information.

Full details of the implementation plan are provided in Appendix A.

Conclusion

In December 1996, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment conducted selected consultations across the NWT with non-government groups such as business, industry, labour, Aboriginal and special interest groups. The purpose was to provide a forum for the public sector to discuss their views and get feedback on the NWT Labour Force Plan.

Many good ideas and suggestions for improving labour force programs and services were generated. Although too numerous to list here, the following is a brief summary of the many themes that emerged.

Wellness: Individual and community wellness issues must be addressed and established as a foundation for labour force development. Until people are well, and unless they have the lifeskills, they will not be able to fully realize the benefits of labour market participation.

Education: Education is key to getting and keeping jobs. Efforts must be strengthened to keep young people in school and more career development for students and their parents provided to increase awareness of options.

Individual Responsibility: Governments and other labour market stakeholders have a role to play in labour force development. Ultimately individuals must take responsibility for directing and developing their own lives.

Improved Linkages: There must be stronger linkages between community development, economic development and labour force development and communities must have greater control or participation in the process. While broad, strategic initiatives like the labour force plan are an important and necessary tool for labour force development, they do not preclude the need for local strategies to develop local people. Additionally, there must be stronger linkages between the labour market and education systems to ensure relevancy of training and increase the likelihood of employment.

Economic Development and Employment Development: More must be done to diversify economic interests. Short-term projects and activities cannot replace long-term economic strategies which include a variety of sectors including traditional activities. Alternative models of employment development are needed in small communities where wage economies are limited.

Targeted Strategies: Targeted programs, services and supports for Aboriginal people, women and seasonal workers are needed to increase equity and ensure that these groups have ongoing opportunities for development. Opportunities must go beyond entry level and provide for a progression along a chosen path.

Programming: More emphasis must be placed on cooperative programs, programs with a practical career orientation, business and entrepreneurship training, training for sectoral and private sector jobs and more apprenticeship programs. Training should be available to people in their first language and should utilize a variety of media, particularly the new technologies. Programs must be flexible and available at the community level.

Mobility: People in the North must prepare themselves to move for training and employment.

Roles and Responsibilities: All labour market partners must review their roles in labour force development given the changing political and economic climate. This includes governments, employers and communities.

From these consultations, one thing is very clear. People want an integrated approach to labour force development which links to economic development at the community level. They want specific programs and services identified, and they want a greater say in labour force planning for their communities.

Developing a skilled Northern workforce and a climate that stimulates economic growth and creates new and sustainable jobs in communities is a key priority of this government. The 1997/98 Budget Address clearly delineates the GNWT's commitment

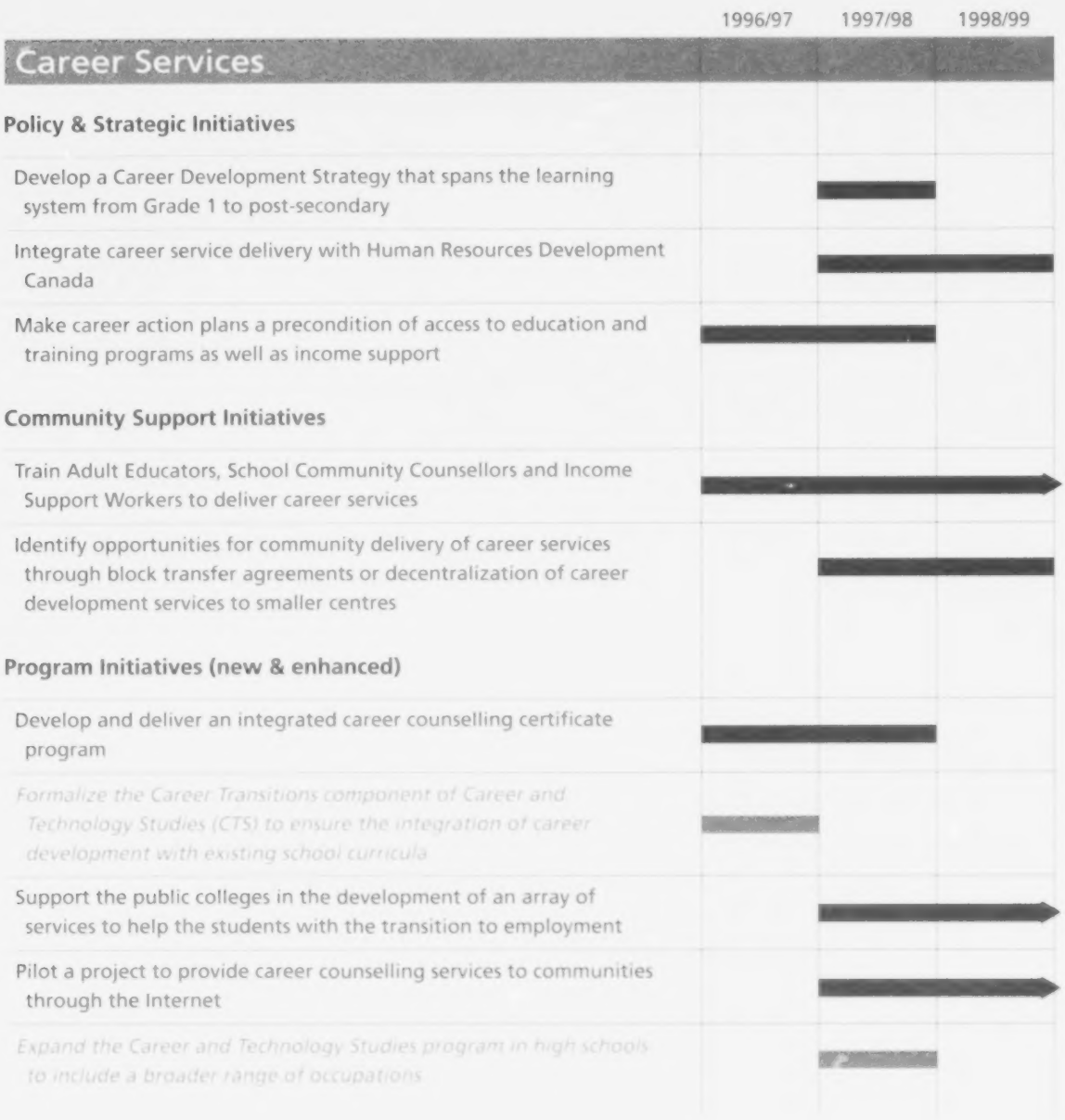
to realization of this vision. The NWT Labour Force Development Plan and the Economic Framework set out the broad parameters through which we can move forward on this work. These documents will be further supported and integrated through the development of a Northern Employment Strategy which will specifically address economic and employment development at the community level.

The Northern Employment Strategy will build upon the results of the consultations and the current economic priorities and initiatives established through the broader plans. Combined, these efforts will form a foundation for a sustainable and coordinated approach to developing the people and the economy of the Northwest Territories.

APPENDIX A – Implementation Plan & Schedule

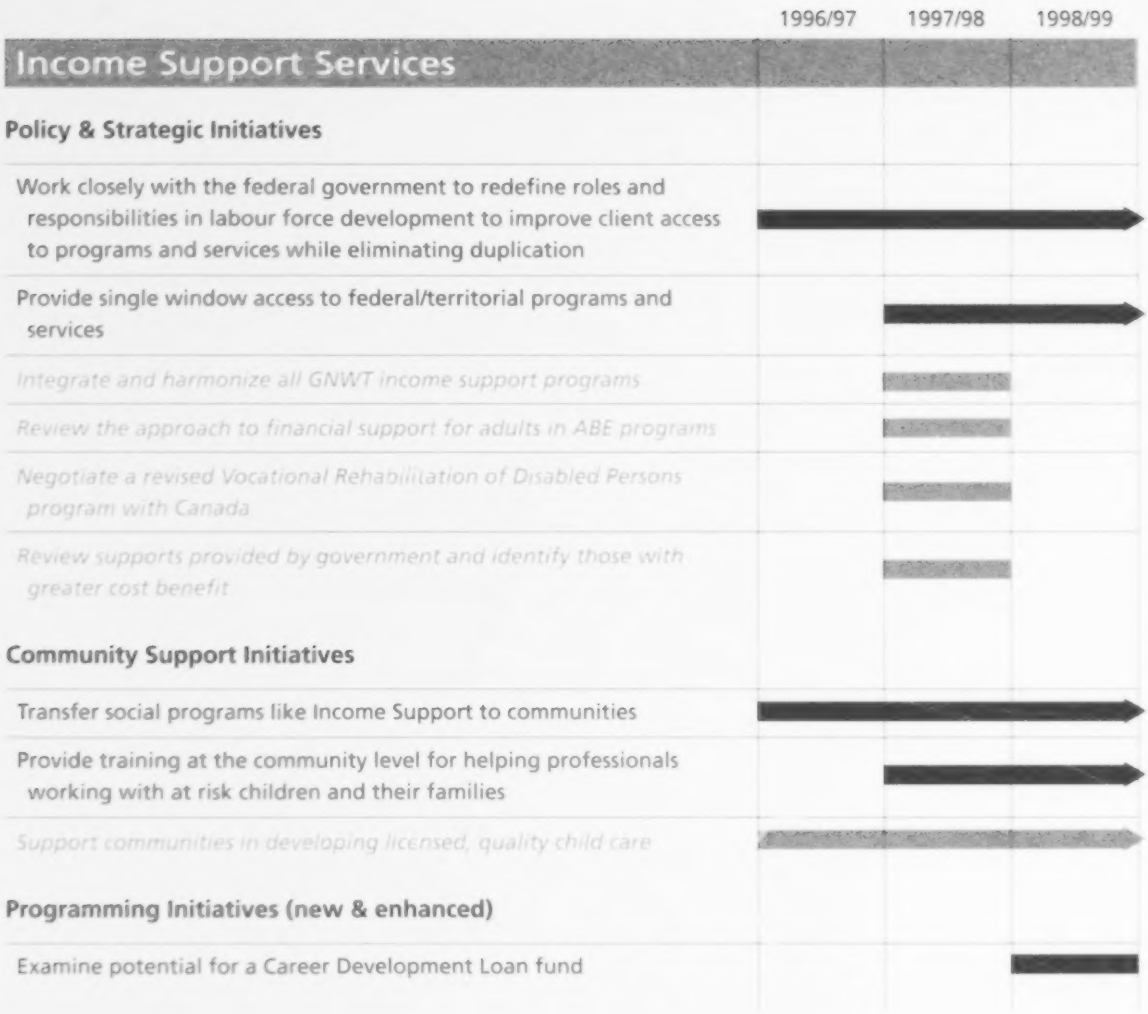
1996/97
1997/98
1998/99
Basic Education
Policy & Strategic Initiatives
Develop an adult basic education policy
Develop standardized ABE curricula and quality standards
Strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal groups administering regional, bi-lateral agreements
Rationalize levels of income support for adult students
Renewed Stay in School Campaign
Community Support Initiatives
Establish senior secondary schooling in every community with a population larger than 500
Maximize access to learning opportunities at the community level through use of new digital communication technologies
Increase access to ABE services into all NWT communities
Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)
Introduce a workplace literacy strategy and program
Introduce 20 Investing in People community projects
Train educators to effectively use technology based delivery methods and revise curricula to accommodate distance education
Offer a program for income support recipients combining education and basic employability skills training

Blue indicates enhanced initiatives. Black indicates new initiatives.


1996/97
1997/98
1998/99
Career Services
Policy & Strategic Initiatives
Develop a Career Development Strategy that spans the learning system from Grade 1 to post-secondary
Integrate career service delivery with Human Resources Development Canada
Make career action plans a precondition of access to education and training programs as well as income support
Community Support Initiatives
Train Adult Educators, School Community Counsellors and Income Support Workers to deliver career services
Identify opportunities for community delivery of career services through block transfer agreements or decentralization of career development services to smaller centres
Program Initiatives (new & enhanced)
Develop and deliver an integrated career counselling certificate program
Formalize the Career Transitions component of Career and Technology Studies (CTS) to ensure the integration of career development with existing school curricula
Support the public colleges in the development of an array of services to help the students with the transition to employment
Pilot a project to provide career counselling services to communities through the Internet
Expand the Career and Technology Studies program in high schools to include a broader range of occupations

1996/97
1997/98
1998/99
Skills Training
Policy & Strategic Initiatives
Fund new college programs based on a demonstrated labour market need
Broaden community access of base funded college programs by rotating locations for delivery
Institute a formal Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition System to recognize skills obtained through informal methods
Research adding a Technical Preparation program option to high school curricula
Institute Territorial Training Awards for employers
Develop sector specific training plans
Community Support Initiatives
Modify existing programs to include the acquisition of traditional as well as workplace skills
Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)
Increase training in professional and technical fields
Increase post-secondary programs in mining from pre-employment to skilled trades
Develop a co-op based stream of the Management Studies Program – Public Sector
Expand Co-op Education initiative by granting credits for high school co-op experiences at the college level and establish stronger linkages with the business community to improve the quality of co-op programs
Increase trades related training to meet the human resource needs of the mining sector
Develop a summer student career development program linking education with work experience
Expand Schools North Apprenticeship Program models
Increase competency based elements of the Apprenticeship System

1996/97
1997/98
1998/99
Employment Services
Policy & Strategic Initiatives
Negotiate new partnership agreements with federal government to deliver employment services through single window access
Establish labour force development boards in the east and west
Develop NWT occupational standards/certification in compliance with existing national standards
Develop occupational standards for educational occupations
Develop 'How To' booklets for human resources planning and effective training, recruitment and selection practices
Community Support Initiatives
Increase community capacity to develop and manage employment development
Wage subsidies for community works programs
Extend the community based Canada-NWT Infrastructure Program to 1997-98
Transfer employment services to communities
Provide communities with the technology to conduct skills inventories
Promote job sharing and other alternative employment models
Develop community profiles to enhance local planning
Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)
Training incentives to occupational sectors with greatest potential for growth
Training incentives for small and medium-sized businesses to train existing employees


1996/97
1997/98
1998/99
Income Support Services
Policy & Strategic Initiatives
Work closely with the federal government to redefine roles and responsibilities in labour force development to improve client access to programs and services while eliminating duplication
Provide single window access to federal/territorial programs and services
Integrate and harmonize all GNWT income support programs
Review the approach to financial support for adults in ABE programs
Negotiate a revised Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons program with Canada
Review supports provided by government and identify those with greater cost benefit
Community Support Initiatives
Transfer social programs like Income Support to communities
Provide training at the community level for helping professionals working with at risk children and their families
Support communities in developing licensed, quality child care
Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)
Examine potential for a Career Development Loan fund

1996/97
1997/98
1998/99
Labour Market Information
Policy & Strategic Initiatives
Establish a forum for employers, communities and governments to work together to identify opportunities and options for meeting the needs of the labour market
Develop a human resource plan for the western public service
Conduct an NWT Employers survey
Establish an intergovernmental Labour Market Information Committee
Create a Northern Employability Skills Profile
Community Support Initiatives
Develop and publish an annual newspaper which provides NWT economic and labour market information for individuals and communities
Programming Initiatives (new & enhanced)
Complete a series of Sector Booklets on opportunities within a variety of NWT sectors
Conduct graduate placement studies for follow-up
Set up electronic job boards within Career Centres to display opportunities for workers
Develop career development resources that will help people make career decisions